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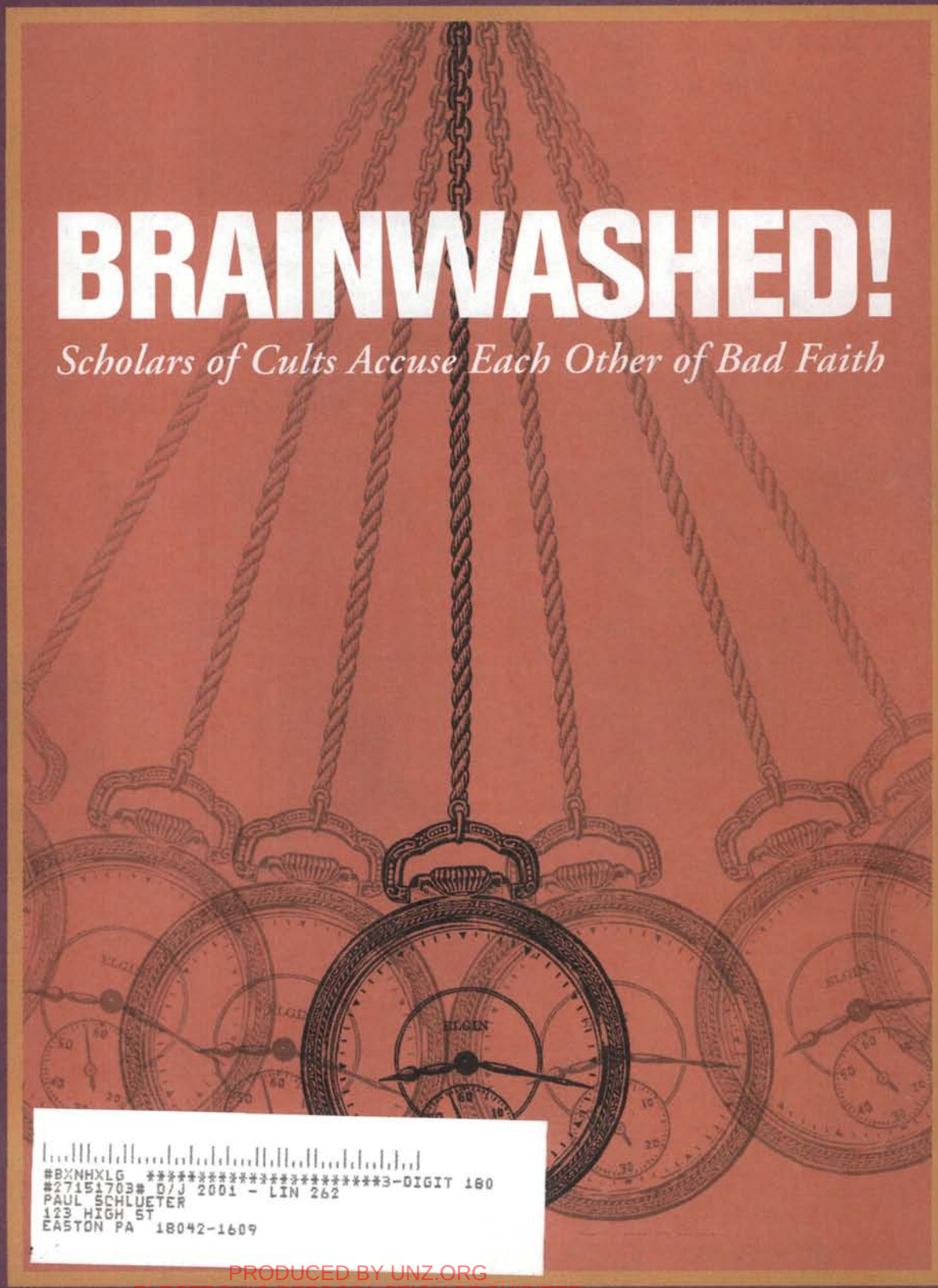

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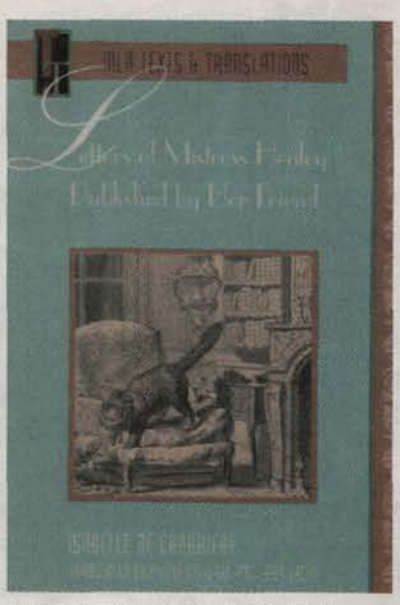

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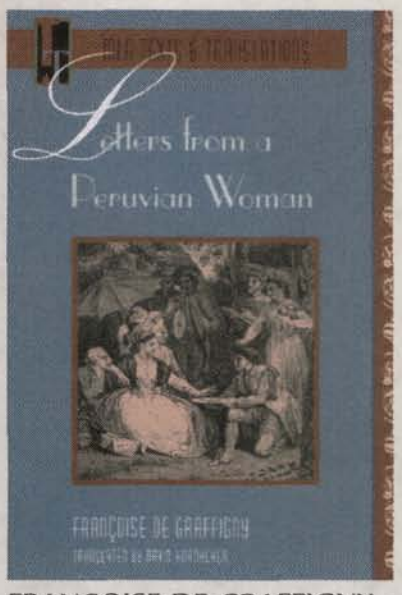

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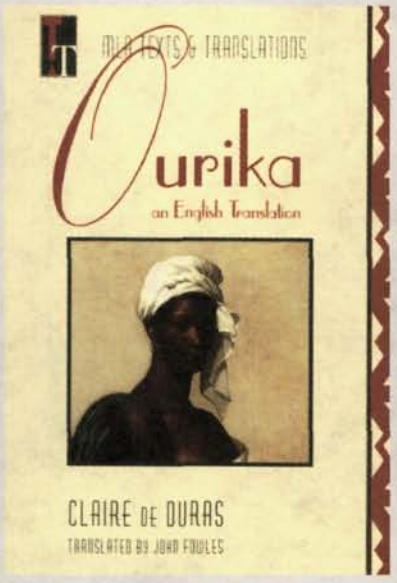

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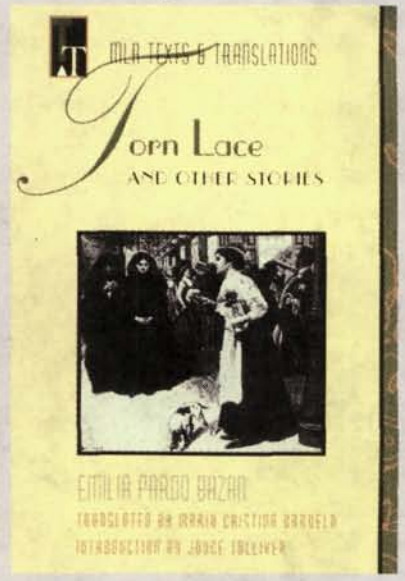

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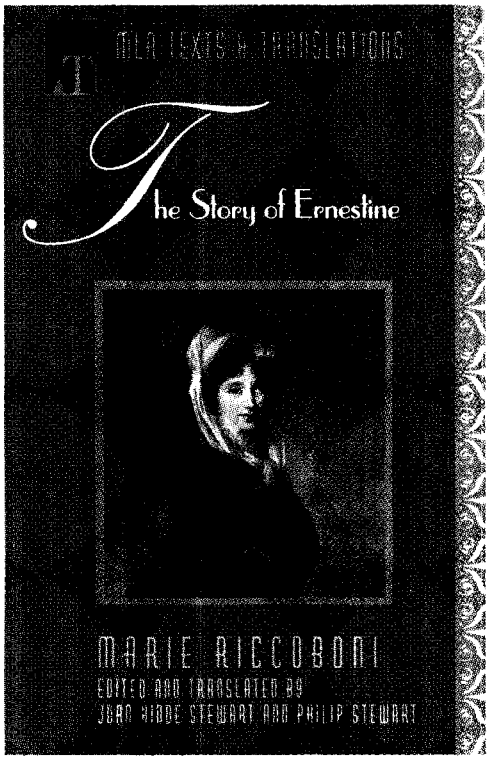
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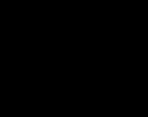

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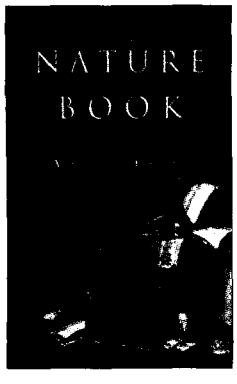

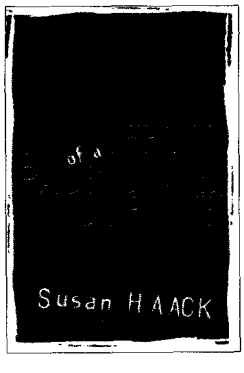

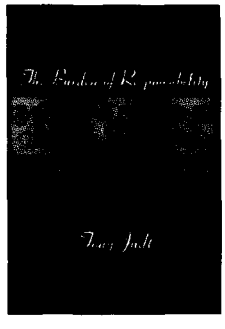

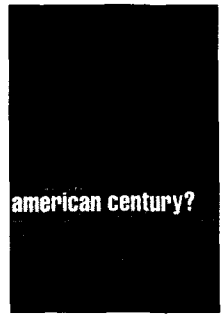

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CRIMSON TIDE

In David Greenberg's article "Behind the Crimson Curtain" [October], Harvard's Anne Taylor defends the confidentiality of the consultative process with the argument that "people are a lot less likely to speak honestly if they know their words are going to be bandied about." That, of course, is one of the major assumptions in defense of secrecy. But aren't such people (i.e., those that prefer that their views not be known publicly) exactly the ones least trustworthy to render a detached evaluation? Informed that their views might become public, consultants are likely to say only what they are prepared to defend, if necessary. Isn't that what one wants in an expert consultant?

BENNETT M. BERGER
PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT SAN DIEGO

In your lengthy and sympathetic treatment of Peter Berkowitz's tenure troubles at Harvard, it is odd that there is never any substantive discussion of whether or not his work is any good. The article complains, correctly, that there were no Nietzsche scholars on the external review committee, but then goes on to propose a supposedly "better" list, that also includes no Nietzsche scholars. This list even mentions as "better" choices philosophers like Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor, who had blurbed Berkowitz's book *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist* (Harvard), and who thus were clearly biased in favor of the candidate. Would that really have been a "fairer" evaluation process?

Contrary to the impression Greenberg's article leaves, Berkowitz was no victim of injustice. I happened to review Berkowitz's book for *Mind*, the leading philosophical journal in the United Kingdom. Although I am sympathetic to Berkowitz's criticisms of postmodernist misreadings of Nietzsche and to his emphasis on Nietzsche's ethical and political views, I thought the book was quite mediocre in its scholarship and its command of the philosophical issues. I was not alone in that view among Nietzsche scholars.

BRIAN LEITER, YALE LAW SCHOOL
(VISITING PROFESSOR, 1998–99)
PROFESSOR OF LAW AND PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Harvard's complicated tenure system is supposedly designed to choose "the best" among scholars in their thirties. You can see what nonsense this putatively rigorous system is by looking at the Harvard History Department. It is no better now than another ten history departments in the country. Harvard has its share of mediocrities and even deadwood. As regards the latter, consider one senior professor of medieval history in the 1940s and 1950s. This paragon published two scholarly articles in his whole career and that was his total publication. One article was wrong and the other unreadable. The best? Ah, but he was socially well connected. I heard him lecture once at Harvard: He was in the classroom even worse than his publications.

NORMAN F. CANTOR
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

SHOWALTER BUSINESS

By concluding with the suggestion that the reason for the controversy around Elaine Showalter is Showalter herself, and her "grandiose projections," you finally make her out to be a "surburban tootsie" ["Who's Afraid of Elaine Showalter?" September]. But surely it is no less grandiose when her opponents—such as Cary Nelson—assume that a hostility to corporate culture equals intellectual integrity.

I would have been happy with any suggestions that Showalter might have offered me when I was unemployed after earning a Ph.D. They could hardly have been as ridiculous as the frequent suggestions that I suddenly had all kinds of time to "do my own work," to use the phrase Nelson mocks in *Will Teach for Food*. Unemployment is the real slap in the face, believe me, and so are suggestions that anyone who makes a decent living outside the academy must be intellectually unserious.

ANTHONY ALBERT NASSAR
ITHACA, NY

A BETTER BIBLE CODE

Hal Cohen's "God Only Knows" [July/August] does a thorough job of pointing out the numerous gaps in logic of the letter-counting would-be Biblical decoders. A much more convincing attempt at Biblical decoding, based on numbers, was published by Joseph Campbell, the great scholar of world mythology. In *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space*, he focused on the chronology of the patriarchs mentioned in Genesis. Their ages at the time that they fathered their successors are implausible (Adam was 130 years old when he begot Seth), as is Noah's six hundred years of age at the time of the Flood. It seems logical to assume that there is some reason for the existence of such a set of unlikely numbers.

Campbell saw in these fantastic numbers a hidden root number that symbolized the great cosmic cycle which exists as the result of the astronomical phenomena known as precession of the equinoxes. In cross-cultural references to Nordic, Hindu, Sumerian, Babylonian, and Greek legends he found the same root number being used to express this 25,920 year cycle.

If there are hidden codes in the Bible, then Campbell's cross-cultural, number-based approach to deciphering them holds the most promise.

ALAN KENNEDY
PARIS, FRANCE

FUNERAL FUROR

Caleb Crain's article ["The Bard's Fingerprints," July/August] makes mistakes

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Field *Notes*

THE COST OF LIVING

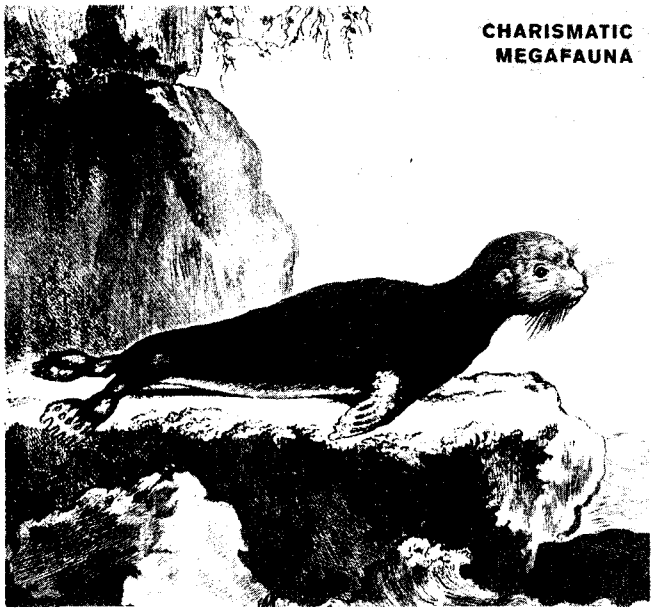
ECONOMISTS CALL IT THE Noah's Ark problem: Given that we can't save every plant and animal we might like to, how do we decide which ones to save? Or, as the economists prefer to put it: How do you allocate finite societal resources among competing demands?

It is not an abstract question. By design, the controversial Endangered Species Act (ESA) presumes that all plant and animal species are worth saving. While that is a noble notion, it has little correspondence to reality. For example, of the 1,104 species listed as threatened or endangered in this country, only about 40 percent have recovery plans in place. And the ESA budget has failed to keep pace: The money allotted per species for recovery programs is now only 60 percent of what it was twenty years ago.

So with budgets dropping and the act itself under threat from Republicans (who think it hurts landowners) and from Democrats (who think it's too easily skirted), some thick-skinned economists have entered the tussle. In a symposium on the ESA published this summer in the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, the participants raised a cold-blooded question of cost versus benefit.

Think of one approach as the Amazon rain forest technique. It goes like this: The Pacific yew tree yields the drug taxol, which is used to treat ovarian cancer, a market worth $1 billion in 1996. Perhaps other drugs will come from other threatened flora or fauna, so we should save those species. But as economists Gardner Brown of the University of Washington and Jason Shogren of the University of Wyoming point out, protecting the right species is a crapshoot. You have to sample many species to get relatively few profitable new products. If, for example, you have to test 250,000 species to have a 95 percent chance of getting ten modestly successful products, and a $300 million investment will yield you $450 million in profits, then the maximum value of saving a species is about $10,000. While that's nice, it's not enough economic incentive to save Hungerford's crawling water beetle, let alone the northern spotted owl (on which $26.4 million was spent between 1989 and 1991 alone).

Well, what about saving a species by shooting it? This is no joke. Some economists wonder whether species protection can be justified by recreational or consumer uses. After all, angling and fishing were worth $60 billion in 1996. Commercial and recreational salmon fishing in the Pacific Northwest were worth $1 billion in 1995. Global spending on eco-tourism has been estimated at $90 to $200 billion, with about 15 percent spent in North America. But outdoor enthusiasts and eco-tourists won't save many species. Unlike spotted owls or seals or mountain lions, few endangered insects or threatened fungi will ever make the menu at even the most exotic restaurants, nor will they suddenly become photogenic.



CHARISMATIC MEGAFAUNA

Can we save an endangered species by shooting it?

Economists have their own euphemism for the cute and furry animals that people like to save: They call them "charismatic megafauna."

Charismatic megafauna bother ever rational economists. "People...have preferences about protecting species...that they will rarely ever, if at all, see or use," Brown and Shogren write wonderingly. Those preferences derail most economists' attempts to come up with specific values for animals. For example, using contingent-valuation surveys (a series of questions wherein people are asked to put a value on their preferences), one study showed that the average person was willing to pay $95 for spotted owl preservation but only a measly $6 to save the striped shiner (a fish).

While that is interesting (if sad news for striped shiner supporters), contingent-valuation surveys create some serious problems for nature lovers. For instance, if you add up the values people put on various endangered species, and then multiply that sum across the U.S. population, it works out to paying 1 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) to preserve less than 2 percent of endangered species. Put another way, to preserve all

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currently threatened species we would have to be willing to pay more than half our GDP.

What if you just jump the valuation queue and work backward from what we're already doing? That was Harvard economists Andrew Metrick and Martin Weitzman's promising tack. After all, they point out, we're already spending money under the ESA. At least in theory, we're spending the money according to some sense of the value of the species and the cost of saving that species.

Unfortunately, the results are equally frustrating. According to Metrick and Weitzman's analysis, we like to spend money on species that aren't particularly threatened. Their explanation? "Either terribly perverse priority setting" or "an overpowering role for omitted, unobservable, charisma-like factors negatively correlated with" endangerment. Translation: We'd rather save cute plants and animals than ugly ones. Either we need to rethink the way we go about deciding which species to save or at least to be honest about our love for the best-looking ones. It's a difficult and serious question, because those charismatic megafauna are awfully cute.

PAUL KEDROSKY

OUT THERE

IF YOU WANT TO SOLVE A problem that's never been solved before, decreed physicist Richard Feynman, you must leave the door to the unknown ajar. But should it be wide open? That's the question confronting readers of *Frontier Perspectives,* a publication of Temple University's embattled Center for Frontier Sciences.

The eight-year-old journal features subjects unlikely to appear in any other peer-reviewed scientific outlet: healing touch, homeopathy, dowsing, even tarot cards. Submissions tend to be speculative rather than clinical, exploring everything from the effects of quantum fields on the human body to "illness as a delusion." Is this a valuable forum for notions too radical to find publication elsewhere? Or just an academic rubber stamp for snake oil?

In a recent attack in the *Skeptical Inquirer,* venerable science columnist Martin Gardner called the publication an embarrassment. "I could hardly believe my eyes," writes Gardner. "I had expected the magazine to be concerned with such outstanding frontiers as superstring theory, the nature of dark matter, the genetic origins of altruism.... The "frontiers" covered in this peculiar journal are nothing of the sort. They are reports on research so far removed from reputable science that it is no wonder academic journals refuse such papers." Linking the publication with another fringe Temple phenomenon, history professor David Jacobs, a well-known believer in alien abductions, Gardner darkly predicts that the school is rapidly "sliding into absurdity."

Nonsense, retorts Richard J. Fox, chairman of Temple's board of trustees, and the center's founder. "Gardner assumes he has all the answers," he says. "Obviously, from my perspective, he doesn't. Any time you deal within scientific paradigms, it's difficult to get outside them. But the journal is peer reviewed, the articles are read by top people in the field, and a number of articles are rejected. This is not just somebody sitting in his living room."

It's true that Nobel laureates, including physicists Brian Josephson and Sir John Eccles, have participated in the international conferences organized by the center on subjects such as electromagnetism. Furthermore, Fox staunchly defends printing eyebrow-raising think pieces in a special non-peer-reviewed section called Invited

> "The title is *Frontier Perspectives,*" responds Kolenda. "We don't call it *Science Fact.*"

Opinions. (These articles include "On The Nature of Tarot," in which a Columbia Teacher's College student cobbles together the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, Jung, and karma, among other elements, to suggest that therapists should start dealing out the mystical deck of cards to their patients.) "It's not the role of the center to be a censor," Fox argues. "We're here to expose ideas and let the individual reader decide."

The debate is certainly timely. In the decade since the center was founded, media contentions over acupuncture, homeopathy, herbalism, and the like, have taken on a finger-stabbing intensity, as proponents and critics accuse each other of bias and lack of rigor. (When a recent issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine* took alternative remedies to task, a media campaign materialized swiftly to rebut the conclusions.) Health insurance for nonstandard treatments and the regulation of herbs and supplements are political hot buttons; two-thirds of American patients follow holistic therapies such as acupuncture and therapeutic massage; and gurus such as Deepak Chopra fill whole sections at Barnes & Noble. Monica Lewinsky even thoughtfully suggested Ginkgo biloba for her presidential honey's fading short-term memory.

Despite this renaissance in holistic notions of health and science, Temple's frontier explorers have had a rocky time of it. Originally supported by the university, the center now receives at least three quarters of its $125,000 annual budget out of Fox's own pocket and the rest from individual donors. The center's first director, Beverly Rubik, a biophysicist who teaches as an

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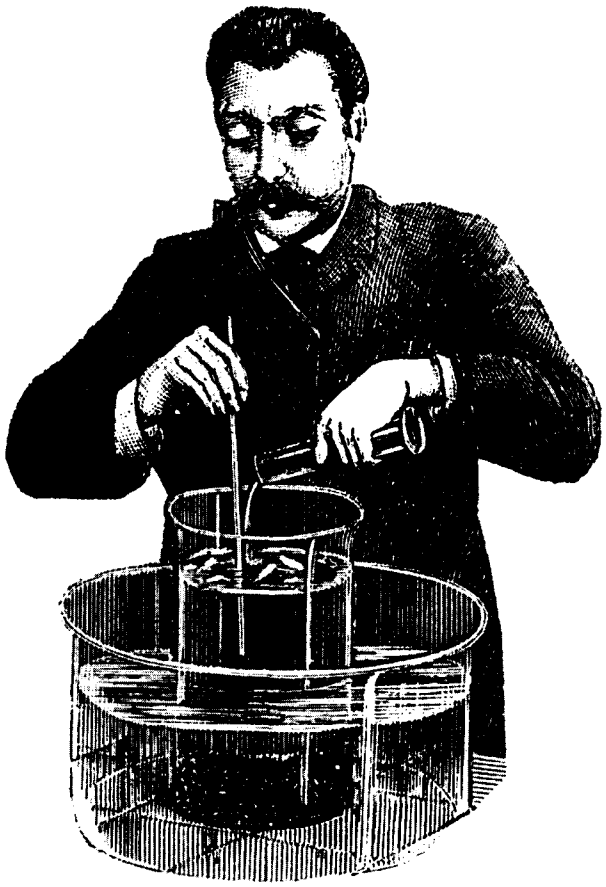
adjunct at six different schools, left in 1995, and her position is now filled by her former assistant, Nancy Kolenda, who has no scientific background but says she has a degree in accounting from Villanova. (The university's registrar's office claims Kolenda took three night-school classes but did not complete a degree.) Making matters more complicated, Rubik, who is on the advisory board of the National Institutes of Health's Office of Alternative Medicine, runs a nonprofit institution from her home with the identical-cousins moniker the Institute for Frontier Science.

As for *Frontier Perspectives'* high-powered and diverse advisory board (which includes alterna-health bigwigs like Andrew Weil), at least one member, eccentric Nobelist Brian Josephson, sounds a bit lukewarm when asked about the post-Rubik publication. "It's certainly not all pseudoscience," avers Josephson cautiously, "though the standards aren't particularly high now that they no longer have a scientist as a director." Despite these caveats, he has no problem with his name appearing on the advisory board. "I'm associated with many unconventional things, and this is just one of them," he notes dryly, then adds in an e-mail: "There are pros and cons. It is not that bad, and I feel they could do with some support."



Thomas Gordon, a Frontier Science board member and a Temple professor of communication sciences, agrees. "What really bugs me about the charge of pseudoscience is that if you look back at the history of science, when somebody comes up with a new theory, it takes years for that to eventually get proved and become mainstream, and in the meantime the poor person promoting the theory gets beaten up." The belief that germs cause illness was initially laughed out of town, he notes. And the clever but untutored carpenter who solved the puzzle of calculating longitude with a super-accurate clock was likewise denied the prize he deserved from the Royal Academy.

There is an underdog quality to the journal. And perhaps criticizing its contents for their oddball notions misses the point: Ideas so far out that they challenge basic assumptions about the nature of the universe are unlikely to flow easily over the transom of any other sort of academic publication. After all, who should peer review speculative pieces about nonlinear waves in homeopathic remedies? Homeopaths? Traditional medical researchers who think homeopathy is superstitious mumbo jumbo? Perhaps no one is really qualified.

Nonetheless, the argument may be taken too far. Many of the articles feature dense, imprecise language that renders the ideas they present so vague that they're essentially irrefutable. Others present absurd notions as factual; consider the statement that "the inner light of the self...remains connected with a human's former celestial residence, a place of pure light and truth."

And what about the scientific method? Doesn't the caveat emptor approach to readership ("that's the writer's opinion" is Kolenda's refrain) abdicate the responsibilities of an academic institution? "The title is *Frontier Perspectives,*" responds Kolenda. "We don't call it *Science Fact.* Otherwise, you know, it would be in competition with *Nature* and *Scientific American.*" And that, presumably, is a competition it would not survive.

EMILY NUSSBAUM

WHO WROTE PALE FIRE?

A NEW ROUND IN A PERENnial debate has mobilized Nabokov scholars around the world. What began as a simple e-mail query on the discussion list Nabokv-L a year ago has blossomed into a full-fledged war involving Nabokovians from St. Petersburg to South Carolina in fiery on-line exchanges that today show no sign of abating. The question, as originally posed, seems straightforward enough: Who wrote the 228-page commentary accompanying the 999-line lyrical poem that begins Nabokov's novel *Pale Fire*? Was it Charles Kinbote, the meddling neighbor of the murdered Appalachian poet John Shade, as the book's foreword explains? Or did Shade pose as Kinbote to become the commentator on his own poem—thereby fulfilling a Nabokovian fantasy of poetic deception?

Never mind that both candidates, alternately defended and derided on Nabokv-L, are fictional characters. Never mind that one of them—Kinbote—confuses things even more by displaying virulent symptoms of unreliability, hinting that he is both the exiled king of the land of Zem-

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bla and a suicidal professor named Botkin. Finally, never mind that somewhere behind the whole puzzle lies the sure hand of a single author, Nabokov himself. For the debate's participants, the questions of authorship posed by this fiendishly complex novel are all-consuming. Even those professors weaned on postmodern theories of indeterminacy find it hard to resist the temptation to take a stance on the crucial questions: Did Shade invent Kinbote? Or is Kinbote a character in his own right?

The one thing everyone agrees on is that Nabokov made it this way on purpose. Indeed, with its overlapping layers of reality and unreality, *Pale Fire* has served as a proving ground for critics since its publication in 1962—and even inspired a character on *The X-Files*. "It is designed to raise questions about why we are prepared to call some things real and not other things," observes Michael Wood, an English professor and Nabokov critic at Princeton University.

To the first-time reader, the conundrums of authorship are unlikely to present themselves. John Shade's lyrical verses on the subject of his daughter's suicide and Kinbote's hilarious and rather haphazard commentary seem only tangentially related. In his foreword, Kinbote reveals he owes his job as commentator to geographic proximity rather than interpretive expertise: After Shade is inexplicably shot by an assassin, the presumptuous Kinbote, who is renting a house next door, pilfers the poet's manuscript.

The result is not your usual annotated edition. Kinbote's glosses serve as a springboard for his own inspired tale of his native land and its exiled king, Charles the Beloved. When Shade's poem describes a "crystal land" of snow reflected out his window, for example, Kinbote enthuses, "Perhaps an allusion to Zembla, my dear country," and launches into two pages of reverie about his former home. Who, on the basis of Kinbote's brazen extrapolations, could possibly think that Kinbote and Shade were one and the same?

And yet, on closer inspection, eerie echoes between poem and commentary begin to proliferate. Recall the famous opening lines of the poem:

> I was the shadow of the waxwing slain
> By the false azure in the windowpane.

In his gloss of these lines, Kinbote discloses that the Zemblan king's coat of arms also bears a waxwing-like emblem. Later, Kinbote recounts that Shade's eyes just after his murder are "directed up at the sunny evening azure"—circling back to the hue of the poem's first couplet.

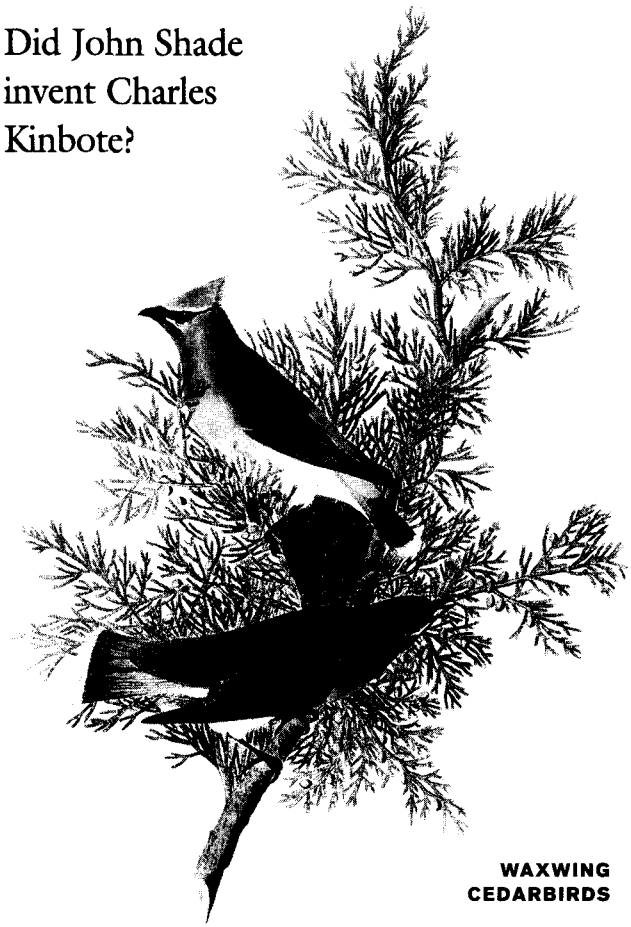
On the basis of connections such as these, Andrew Field, Nabokov's original biographer, became the first Shadean, arguing that Shade stages his own death so he can interpret his own poem via an assumed identity. These days, however, Brian Boyd, Nabokov's esteemed biographer at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, is considered the most outspoken advocate of the Shade-as-sole-author position—both on and off the Nabokv-L discussion forum. A Shadean for the past twenty-five years, Boyd has argued this position so long that it has become part of his scholarly identity. He first read *Pale Fire* at seventeen and finished it twice more before his next birthday. "I reread it every so often, with the same excitement, and always prepared to dump the Shadean reading, but always startled by the plethora of details that insist I adopt it," he confided on the discussion list last year.

Boyd suggests that *Pale Fire* depends on "powerful and successive surprises of identity." Kinbote's commentary would have us believe that Kinbote is a Zemblan king, for example, but seemingly inadvertent clues suggest that he is really a depressed émigré professor named Botkin who teaches at the same college as Shade. Similarly, if Kinbote is to be believed, Shade's killer is a gunman hired by the secret police of Zembla. The more probable explanation is that the killer is a criminal lunatic on a misguided revenge trip: He mistakes Shade for the judge who put him behind bars.

In light of the many such twists and turns of identity, Brian Boyd contends, the idea that Shade composed Kinbote's commentary should not be shocking. He has a motive. By serving as his own interpreter, Shade turns the abrupt end of his lifelong search for a "web of sense" into a "portal of discovery." In this way, his poem becomes richer and stranger.

Kinboteans offer a different explanation of the connections between poem and commentary. Charles Nicol of Indiana State University emphasizes instances in the commentary where Kinbote draws pedantic analogies between Shade's poetic world and his own beloved Zembla. At one moment, Kinbote notes

Did John Shade invent Charles Kinbote?



WAXWING CEDARBIRDS

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the striking likeness between Shade's description of his wife, Sybil, and the Zemblan queen, Disa: "I trust the reader appreciates the strangeness of this, because if he does not, there is no sense in writing poems, or notes to poems, or anything at all." Passages like these, Nicol contends, are proof of how much—and how desperately—Kinbote adjusts his imaginary Zembla to correspond more closely to Shade's poem. It's a case of inspired thievery on Kinbote's part.

The original Kinbotean, UC-Santa Cruz's Page Stegner, takes the theory further, arguing that Kinbote invented both parts. If he could invent the fantastical Zembla, Stegner's argument runs, surely he could conjure up the poem's pallid Appalachia. Rebutting this leap of logic, Nicol quips, "The moon steals its pale fire from the sun, but that's far from the moon creating the sun." For Kinbote to reflect some of Shade's brilliant details in his commentary is one thing. For him to create Shade is another thing entirely, one that Nicol finds implausible.

> Brian Boyd has argued his position so long that it has become part of his scholarly identity.

But now, just when you might think you have a handle on who sides with whom in the Shade-Kinbote dispute, one of the central parties to the controversy has come up with yet another interpretation. In an article in the 1997 issue of *Nabokov Studies* that shocked even the most die-hard Shadeans and Kinboteans, Brian Boyd abandoned his long-standing commitment to the Shade-as-sole-author theory to assert for the first time Kinbote's validity as a character in his own right.

Boyd now argues that Shade dies but continues to play a role in the text as, literally, a shade. As a ghost, he influences Kinbote from the otherworld—the far side of the boundary separating life and death. Shade helps to shape Kinbote's fantasies into a complex narrative that unfolds alongside the poem. Shade, who from the poem's first image has sought to project himself imaginatively beyond death, now succeeds as a ghostly influence.

This otherworldly solution would be extraordinary, Boyd contends, "if not for Shade's and Nabokov's preoccupation with the afterlife." Boyd cites as evidence Nabokov's "explicitly ghostly" novel *Transparent Things* (1972), and that dead friends influence a character's fate from the beyond in "The Vane Sisters."

This new theory has only added to the fray on-line. Wood, for example, acknowledges its importance but says Boyd's reading cheapens the novel's underlying message. In Boyd's theory, he says, "death itself is diminished, its horror canceled, and a desperate sentimentality beckons. It's as if the playwright Nahum Tate had decided to deal with Cordelia's death not by removing it from his version of *King Lear* but by bringing her back as helpful spirit."

Stay tuned.

CATHERINE SAINT LOUIS

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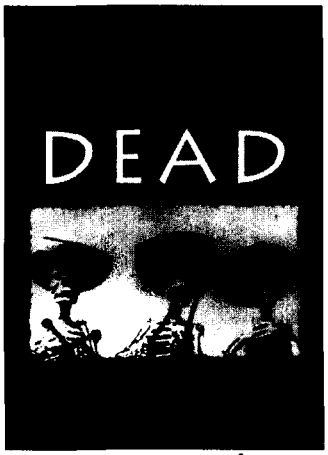

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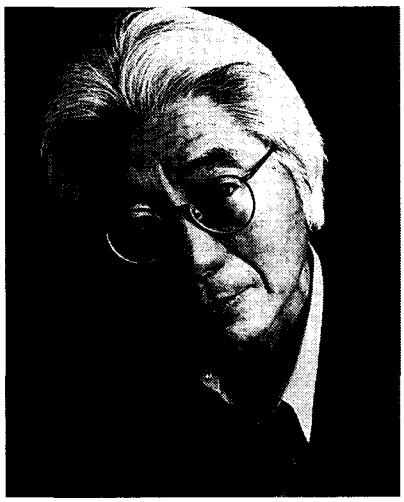

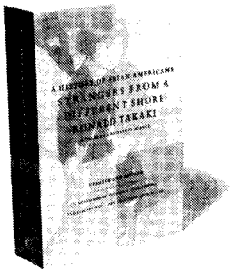

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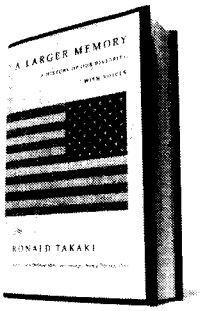

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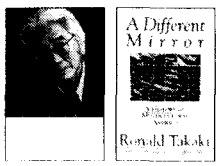

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••••

Doug Henwood, editor of *Left Business Observer* and author of *Wall Street: How It Works and for Whom* (Verso, 1997).

"Russia's experience over the last ten years counts as one of the greatest economic disasters of all time. Sure, Soviet life fell well short of Utopia, whether measured against socialist or consumerist ideals, but there was a certain degree of security, even comfort. Now the population is shrinking and there's fear of starvation this winter. What happened? Standard explanations blame the legacy of the Soviet economic system itself, but economist **David Kotz** and journalist **Fred Weir** show in *Revolution From Above: The Demise of the Soviet System* (Routledge, 1997) that recent developments were planned by the party-state elite. Unlike Gorbachev, who apparently wanted to democratize Soviet socialism, the *nomenklatura* feared that doing so would threaten their privilege and power. They opted instead for a singularly brutal, unproductive form of capitalism. One can fault the authors for paying insufficient attention to international developments—the Reagan military buildup, for example—but their book makes its central point so well that I won't complain."

••••

James Surowiecki, a business columnist for *New York* magazine who writes the Moneybox column for *Slate*.

"There's no place for economic disasters in traditional neoclassical economic theory, with its assumptions about the efficiency of markets and the rationality of investors. Yet bubbles and busts are perennial features of capitalist societies. In recent years, economists have started to think about these phenomena as more than just inexplicable aberrations, in no small part thanks to **Charles Kindleberger**, whose *Manias, Panics, and Crashes*, 3rd ed. (Wiley, 1996) remains the most comprehensive and rigorous look at the long history of financial hysteria. Kindleberger's reflections on the importance of a 'lender of last resort' seem especially relevant, considering the recent debate over the proper role of the IMF and the World Bank. From a different angle, **Peter Bernstein**'s *Against the Gods* (Wiley, 1996), a history of the concept of risk, provides invaluable—and entertaining—insight into exactly why investors act the way they do and how 'rationality,' at least in the short term, remains such an elusive goal."

••••

Thomas E. Hall, professor of economics at Miami University of Ohio and co-author, with J. David Ferguson, of *The Great Depression: An International Disaster of Perverse Economic Policies* (Michigan, 1998).

"During this century, two decades stand out in terms of poor economic performance: the 1930s and the 1970s. During the 1930s, most economies experienced severe recession and deflation. The somewhat different German experience—important because of its connection to the rise of Hitler—is chronicled in *The Nazi Economic Recovery, 1932–1938* (Cambridge, 1996) by **R.J. Overy**. This short, readable book chronicles economic conditions that existed in Germany from World War I to the depression that started in 1929, and then examines the recovery that began in 1932. During the 1970s, disaster struck the United States in the form of high inflation, a severe recession, and then even higher inflation. Many people were responsible for these problems, but chief among them was Richard Nixon. *Nixon's Economy: Booms, Busts, Dollars, and Votes* (Kansas, 1998) by **Allen Matusow** is a fascinating examination of the role politics played in shaping the perverse economic policies of the Nixon administration."

••••

Kim Phillips-Fein, a New York–based freelance journalist who has written about labor and economics for *The Nation*, *The American Prospect*, and *The Baffler*.

"Economic disasters are, by definition, abnormalities—even in capitalist economies, where financial crises, recessions, and depressions appear to be regular features of the economic system. So it's worth remembering that for workers even boom times can feel a lot like a crisis. Consider **Bill Bamberger** and **Cathy David-**

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son's *Closing: The Life and Death of an American Factory* (Doubletake, 1998), which examines the human costs of deindustrialization via a lushly photographed case study of the closing of a Southern furniture factory. Unfortunately, despite the unusual view it provides into the lives of working-class Americans, *Closing*'s maudlin approach to class conflict blunts its analytic edge. A much more compelling take on deindustrialization is **Robert Fitch**'s *The Assassination of New York* (Verso, 1993), which argues that a small group of wealthy real estate moguls were instrumental in pushing industry out of New York, profiting mightily from the continuing crisis of the postindustrial city."

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Jeffrey Madrick, editor of *Challenge* and author of *The End of Affluence: The Causes and Consequences of America's Economic Dilemma* (Random House, 1997).

"Most books about modern business moguls either sensationalize their achievements or demonize their foibles. 'See how they lied to their girlfriends,' we are told with shock. This is unfortunate, since understanding economic disasters involves grasping the complexity of both systemic forces and individual players. There is one book, however, so rich in pertinent detail that it conveys a mogul's conniving and complex personality more comprehensively than any profile of a contemporary businessman I've read. It's **Edward Jay Epstein**'s *Dossier: The Secret History of Armand Hammer* (Random House, 1996). Hammer—oil magnate, takeover artist, cad—built Occidental Petroleum into one of the nation's largest companies through bribery and lies. Then he nearly destroyed it with his vain Russian diplomacy and a string of bad deals. For Epstein, character is indeed plot. Rather than moralizing, he provides readers with the facts, many of them dug out of newly available Russian archives and FBI files."

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Nelson Lichtenstein, professor of history at the University of Virginia and author of *Walter Reuther: The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit* (Illinois, 1997).

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Stanley Aronowitz, professor of sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center and author of *From the Ashes of the Old: American Labor and America's Future* (Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

"In *Secrets of the Temple: How the Federal Reserve Runs the Country* (Simon & Schuster, 1987), **William Greider**, heir to the turn-of-the-century populists who fought against hard money, argues that the Federal Reserve Bank's policies have been ruinous to farmers, workers, and many in the salaried middle class. His carefully documented case violates the conventional wisdom that moderate inflation is bad for most of us. Greider blames the Fed's deflationary moves—high interest rates and rigid control of the money supply—for the epidemic of personal bankruptcy among small farmers, the steep manufacturing layoffs of the 1980s, and the chronic wage stagnation that still plagues the American economy. For Greider, it's a cabal of big bankers along with the Fed itself who benefit from deflation. He has not told the whole story and his conspiracy theory may grate on liberal sensibilities, but that doesn't mean he's wrong."

••••

Paul Davidson, professor of political economy at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and author of *Post Keynesian Macroeconomic Theory: A Foundation for Successful Economic Policies for the Twenty-First Century* (Edward Elgar, 1994).

"Since 1973, the global economy has stumbled from one economic crisis to another: stagflation in the 1970s, Latin American debt problems in the 1980s, and global financial problems today. In each instance, financiers have turned to the World Bank and the IMF for help. Critics contend that these organizations, controlled by the U.S. Treasury, have only exacerbated problems. The final volume of **Robert Skidelsky**'s three-volume biography of John Maynard Keynes, *The Economist as Prince, 1937–1946* (Viking, forthcoming), offers a glimpse of what the global economy might have looked like without the World Bank and IMF. The book's central drama unfolds at Bretton Woods, where Keynes, as head of the British delegation, clashed with the U.S. delegation over policies for controlling postwar international payments. The adoption of the American proposal for an IMF and World Bank over Keynes's 'bancor' plan—which was not tied to any national currency—was a victory of political power over enlightened thought."

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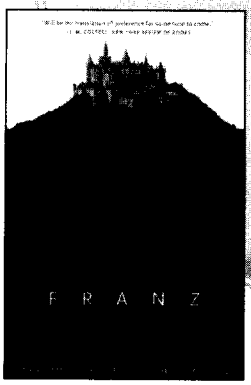

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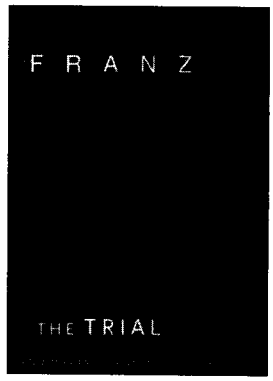

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Inside*Publishing*

DRINKING: A LOVE STORY

FOR A KHAKI-CLAD 1990s OBSESSED WITH 1950s swing dancing, cigars, and the big-band sound, the Martini, in all its nostalgic glory, has become the liquid accessory of choice. The commercial possibilities of the newly repopularized Martini have not escaped publishers. In the past year, fanciers of the cocktail have been treated to numerous histories, cultural surveys, and coffee-table books—among them Barnaby Conrad's *The Martini: An Illustrated History of an American Classic* (Chronicle Books), Anistatia R. Miller and Jared M. Brown's *Shaken Not Stirred: A Celebration of the Martini* (HarperPerennial), and William Grimes's *Straight Up or On the Rocks: A Cultural History of American Drink* (Simon & Schuster).

But when Rutgers classics professor Lowell Edmunds first published his seminal study, *The Silver Bullet: The Martini in American Civilization* (Greenwood Press) in 1981, the Martini had all but disappeared. What Nikita Khrushchev once labeled "the U.S.A.'s most lethal weapon" had become such an unpopular anachronism by the late 1970s that Jimmy Carter could point to the excesses of the "three-Martini lunch" to berate the decadence of fat-cat politicians and businessmen. And at the dawn of the health-conscious 1980s, the beloved drink of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Hemingway's stoic expatriates, and countless white-collar executives had been eclipsed by lite beers, wine spritzers, and designer mineral waters. Even at The Four Seasons, bastion of Establishment tradition, well-bred patrons ordered wine almost fifty times more often than Martinis, according to a survey conducted by *Forbes* magazine.

Edmunds's study, a self-described "labor of love" that developed from his youthful enthusiasm for Martini recipes, offered a dry, intoxicating polemic on the "proper" formulation of the classic Martini: It must be made with cold English gin and dry French vermouth mixed in a 4:1 or 8:1 ratio, chilled, but not served, with ice made from springwater. A piece of lemon peel should be twisted over the glass to release its essential oils and then discarded. Don't even ask about olives.

Edmunds also offered a wide-ranging cultural examination of the complex "messages" of the Martini drawn from personal anecdotes, literary examples, cartoons, films, bartenders' manuals, and other documents of popular culture. Readers were treated to a breezy anatomy of "what the Martini has said to or about them." The drink (and, by extension, the drinker) is urbane, civilized, masculine, and fundamentally American. And Edmunds illustrated this heritage of affluence, sociability, maturity, and conviviality with lively vignettes from *Auntie Mame*, Cole Porter, and M.F.K. Fisher.

Nikita Khrushchev called the Martini "the U.S.A.'s most lethal weapon."

But the Martini, Edmunds insisted, also has a less carefree side. "If the Martini is the civilized antidote to civilization," Edmunds wrote, "like any antidote, it can become poison if it is used in excess or for the wrong purposes." Citing the examples of such Martini commentators as Jack London, Pearl S. Buck, and Sinclair Lewis, Edmunds deepened and darkened the social role the Martini has played since its creation in the 1880s. These writers' fictional characters seek "the Martini that comforts the misfit, the solitary traveler, the loner, or the one who is world-weary or somehow at a loss."

"As the excessive drink," Edmunds argued, "the Martini is the characteristic choice of the alcoholic." For example, in Charles Jackson's novel *Lost Weekend*, "the inebriated hero drinks Martinis while he plays 'the solitary observant gentleman-drinker'...and steals the purse of the woman sitting next to him." Edmunds concludes, "With the alcoholic, we reach the fulfillment of the uncivilized propensities of the Martini."

When Edmunds isn't moonlighting as a self-taught bacchanologist, the silver-haired professor

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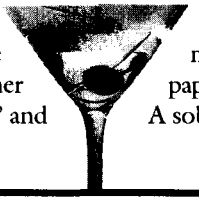
of Greek and Roman poetry and prose spends his days in New Brunswick writing about intertextuality in Roman poetry and Athenian urban legends. His nonalcoholic books include *Theatrical Space and Historical Place in Sophocles'* Oedipus at Colonus; *From a Sabine Jar: Reading Horace, Odes 1.9*; and *Commentaries on the Individual Odes of Pindar.* While Edmunds doubts there are explicit connections between his Greek and Roman scholarly explorations and modern Martini consumption per se, he does allow that "studying ancient Greek and Roman societies has made me more aware of ritual."

This December, Edmunds's 1981 study returns to the bookshelves fully revised and with a snappy new title: *Martini, Straight Up: The Classic American Cocktail* (Johns Hopkins University Press). But if Edmunds's early work introduced innocents to the cultural ambiguities of the ascetic Martini, this time around he also explains why he finds the current Martini craze hard to swallow. For in its current incarnation, the Martini needn't contain even a hint of gin or vermouth, and certainly not in the precise proportions espoused by Edmunds in the original edition. "Bars across the land," he notes, "have Martini menus offering concoctions that bear no resemblance to the traditional drink.... These include April's Martini (Godiva chocolate liqueur, Frangelico, and an orange twist), the Cosmopolitan (Absolut Vodka, Cointreau, orange juice, and a splash of cranberry juice), and the Blue Skyy (Skyy Vodka, blue curaçao, and an orange twist)." In fact, in these giddy days, the Martini doesn't even need to be a drink. Edmunds notes that "Florence Fabricant [of *The New York Times*] offers her readers recipes for 'Salmon Tartar Martini' and 'Ecuadorean Ceviche Martini.'"

"The glass," says Edmunds, "has done the work."



Employing the ideas of Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, and other theorists who probably prefer wine, Edmunds argues that what marks the recent return of the Martini is not the drink itself but its *image*. "The glass," Edmunds claims, "has done the work." He finds in artist Claes Oldenburg's *Tilting Neon Cocktail* (1983) a distillation of the Martini's iconographic essence. The rotating sculpture, a three-dimensional rendering of the ubiquitous neon cocktail sign in stainless steel, cast aluminum, and Plexiglas, evokes the Martini's aura of potency and glamour. Here, Edmunds rhapsodizes, the Martini is "the drink fit for millionaires, as Oldenburg well knew, gracing the happy occasions of their and others' lives."

For all of Edmunds's interest in the modern resurrection of the Martini, he still believes that the drink's best days are behind it, and his passions are still stirred by what's in the glass rather than by the glass itself. The preface to the revised edition of *Martini, Straight Up* begins not with a celebration of the Martini revival but with a nostalgic evocation of the spirits of the past. "In my experience of the Martini outside of my own home, how often have I seen the ravages of time," Edmunds writes. "My earlier playfulness as a Martini writer is no longer possible. The persona of Martini purist that I adopted in the first edition of this book—or, as Werner Dannhauser, a reviewer in the *American Spectator*, called it, 'Martini elitist'—is no longer a persona. It is the real I." And the real Edmunds repeats his earlier complaint against "these young would-be bartenders," who have banished gin in favor of vodka (worse still, some of them serve the drink on the rocks). The vodka Martini, he declares, "must be classed with fast foods, rock and roll, snowmobiles, acid rain, polyester fabrics, supermarket tomatoes, and books printed on toilet paper as a symptom of anomie."

A sober judgment, to be sure.

VICKI HSUEH

THE BIRTH OF TENNIS

WHILE SPORTS HAVE RECENTLY BECOME A POPULAR area of study for scholars in the fields of sociology and cultural theory, historians of games, a group made up largely of sportswriters and player-enthusiasts, have generally maintained their amateur status. As Heiner Gillmeister, a professor of linguistics at the University of Bonn, notes in the introduction to the English translation of his dizzingly meticulous book *Tennis: A Cultural History* (NYU, 1998), "books on the history of sport, and the history of tennis in particular, have hardly ever been works of scholarship." It's not hard to see why. Uncovering the origins of sports can be a tricky and highly speculative endeavor. The late nineteenth century saw the rise of record keeping, international competition, and a European leisure class obsessed with athletics. Details about the earlier games from which modern sports emerged have remained obscure.

But as Gillmeister, described on the jacket flap of his book as "a world authority on ball games," demonstrates, tennis is uniquely accessible to scholarship: Not only can its documented history be traced back eight hundred years, but it was

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played predominantly by the literate (monks and members of the aristocracy), who left behind poems, academic treatises, instruction books, and the occasional record of a legal dispute to help historians trace its steps.

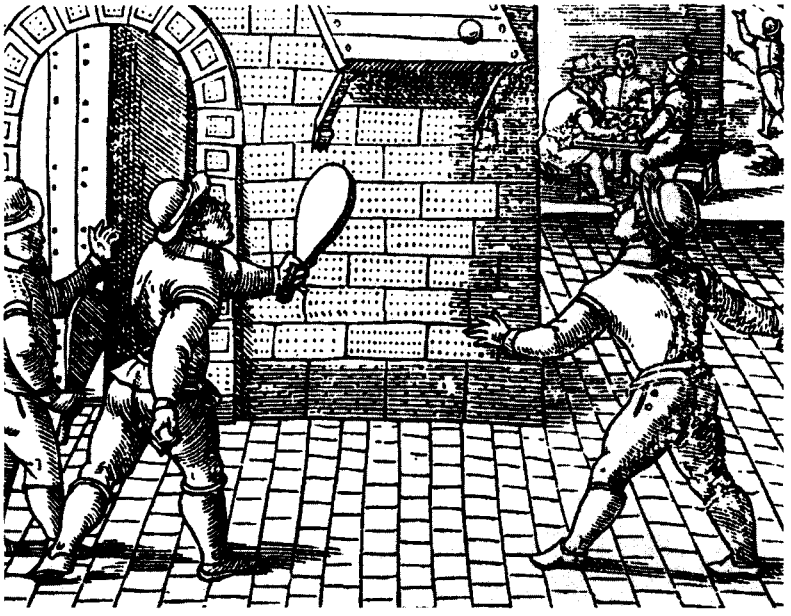
The book begins with an intriguing theory of the origins of European ball games that suggests they emerged as a kind of lower-class imitation of the "passage of arms" contests—mock battles—that took place in medieval tournaments. In Europe's original ball game—an even more violent version of rugby and clearly an ancestor of soccer and football—a team had to put a pouch stuffed with hay through an opposing "gate" or goal. The game was usually played during wedding feasts and, if Gillmeister is to be believed, served a ritualistic function: "to hammer the marriage contract into the memories of those concerned."

But how did the rule-bound and distinctly less macho game of tennis emerge from this chaos? "At some point in the twelfth century," Gillmeister writes, "the clergy, banned by the authorities of the church from these public riots called football, thought of ways to improve their situation." That is, they brought the game indoors, away from the prying eyes of the laity, and, instead of each other, began pummeling only the ball.

The game of tennis originated in France but quickly—by medieval standards, at least—spread throughout Europe, most likely carried by itinerant monks and the monastically educated members of the aristocracy. Eventually, a fairly standardized version emerged, which only marginally resembles modern tennis (but was identical in many ways to court tennis; also known as real tennis, royal tennis, and *jeu de paume*, it is still practiced by a handful in small clubs around the world). Originally played on a walled court, with no net, this game required participants (in teams as large as ten) to strike the hard—and not particularly bouncy—leather-covered balls with a bare, or occasionally gloved, hand. Points could be scored by hitting "hazards"—recesses and fixed objects on the walls behind the players. Rackets—which were little more than short wooden paddles at first—are not mentioned until the sixteenth century. Although the scoring system was similar to that used in the modern game, the rules were more complex, and the game emphasized strategy rather than athleticism.

But if the game in many ways was different, Gillmeister demonstrates that the behaviors associated with it were not. In what must be one of the first recorded temper tantrums in sports history, found in a Flemish document from 1567, a dispute broke out over a line call—the line in this case being the cord which at that time served as a net. "Van Scherus," Gillmeister writes, "had struck a ball under the net, upon which he, Pieterssen, had snatched it and thrown it (outside) over the wall. Van Scherus, in an outburst of rage (because he had paid for the balls), insisted on getting paid for the loss; if not, he threatened to stab the life out of good old Pieterssen with his dagger. Pieterssen retaliated by offering to try out his racket on Van Scherus's pate.... They drew knives. Van Scherus lost his life."

But at the heart of Pieterssen and Van Scherus's dispute may have been another cause: Tennis, it seems, was almost inseparable from gambling. From



this, and some creative linguistic analysis, Gillmeister plausibly asserts that the game's peculiar scoring system (then, as now, measured in increments of fifteen, with "forty-five" shortened to "forty," presumably, to save a syllable) is based on the relative values of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century French coins (1 *gros denier tournois*=15 *deniers*). Sixty, or game, may have been a limit placed on betting, as suggested by a law passed in Munich in 1365 for dice games. Additionally, there is evidence that "set" could be used to mean a gambling stake in Middle English.

"If you kiss her count fifteen/If you touch the buds, thirty," wrote the naughty poet Théophile de Viau.

In this context, that great mystery of tennis, the origin of the term "love," may also need to be revised. Gillmeister believes that the worthless "love" may not be derived from the resemblance between the numeral zero and an

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egg—*l'oeuf* in French—as is commonly supposed. Instead it might mean that a player was playing merely for love of the game, or for honor (the Flemish word for which is *lof*).

Like popular sports today, tennis penetrated the literary imagination of medieval and Renaissance Europe, becoming a favorite metaphor for subjects as varied as warfare and seduction (the frequently censored Parisian poet Théophile de Viau predicted modern dating's favorite sports metaphor—the "home run"—in 1622, when he penned the immortal, immoral lines, "If you kiss her count fifteen/If you touch the buds, thirty..."). But after enjoying much popularity, tennis declined during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—a development influenced at least in part, according to Gillmeister, by the revolutionary events in France. Still, even as tennis, clubby and exclusive, became increasingly marginalized with the expansion of the middle class, a British major named Walter Clopton Wingfield would soon bring it wide renown. Patented in 1874 under the preposterous name of "Spharistike," or "lawn tennis," Wingfield's new version of tennis, sold in portable kits, capitalized on the invention of vulcanized rubber (which allowed for light and bouncy balls), the end of a croquet fad (leaving large numbers of empty lawns), and the recent invention of the lawn mower. It was only three years later that the first Wimbledon championship was played. By 1902, the Davis Cup, then in its second year, was drawing teams from the farthest reaches of the British Commonwealth, as well as much of Europe.

Gillmeister ends his narrative at the turn of the century, and, after three hundred pages of such fascinating minutiae, it is something of a relief. One wonders what he would have done with the modern period, since, as he notes with considerable understatement in his preface, "the history of modern lawn tennis is far better documented than that of its predecessor." But Gillmeister, it seems, is not interested in such a task—according to his publisher, he is currently working on a history of golf.

JEFF ALEXANDER

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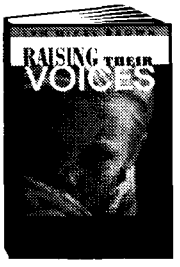

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Brawer's mission is to persuade the business class that cultural capital can be converted into the real thing.

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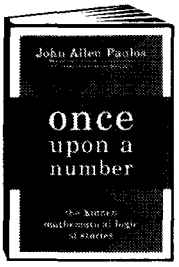

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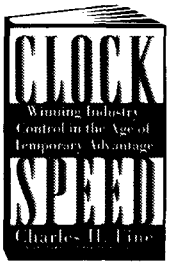

Taking inspiration from the world of biology, the author uses the "fruit fly" to peer into the future of industrial evolution and find practical advice for all industries, from automobiles to health care. Fine argues that each industry has its own evolution life cycle, "clockspeed", measured by the rate at which it introduces new products, processes and organizational structures. *(Perseus Books) hardcover, 20% discounted price: $20.00**

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academia to business was "to utilize my teaching and writing skills to advantage," some of his former colleagues will wish he could utilize them with more felicity in this book. But in fact, the haughty professoriat is not Brawer's intended audience. His mission, cleverly camouflaged in talk of self-empowerment and uplifting anecdotes about the bra business, is to raise the brows of the business class above the bottom line, and persuade it that cultural capital can be converted into the real thing. The book, Brawer helpfully explains in his introduction, "is neither a historical survey of novels and plays about business, nor a history of Maidenform, nor a personal memoir of my career with the company...." Instead, it is a survey of some of the themes likely to preoccupy executives and entrepreneurs facing the vicissitudes of the global marketplace and the intricate rituals of office culture—"Selling on a Grand Scale," "Overcoming Corporate Gospel," "Chaos," and "Stress Management." Each chapter dispenses commonsensical advice via Maidenform war stories (the one about the failure of a line of sheer bras called No-Show Naturals is a tour de force and instructive on many levels) and close-ish readings of selected novels and plays. David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross* demonstrates the link between salesmanship and showmanship; John Dos Passos's *The Big Money* warns of the human cost of the single-minded pursuit of efficiency. Aside from brief forays into Chaucer and Shakespeare, most of the works Brawer discusses—Joseph Heller's *Something Happened*, Sloan Wilson's *The Man In the Grey Flannel Suit*, Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*—are more or less realistic treatments of the world of business. And while Brawer is eager to correct some common misperceptions—that Willy Loman is a victim of heartless bosses, rather than of his own lack of self-knowledge, and that Wilson's novel is a simple condemnation of mindless conformity—he doesn't offer much in the way of what today's scholars would recognize as literary criticism.

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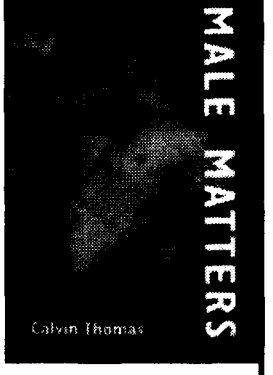

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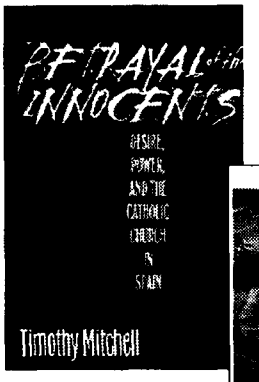

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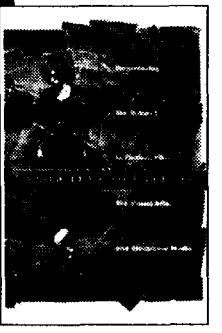

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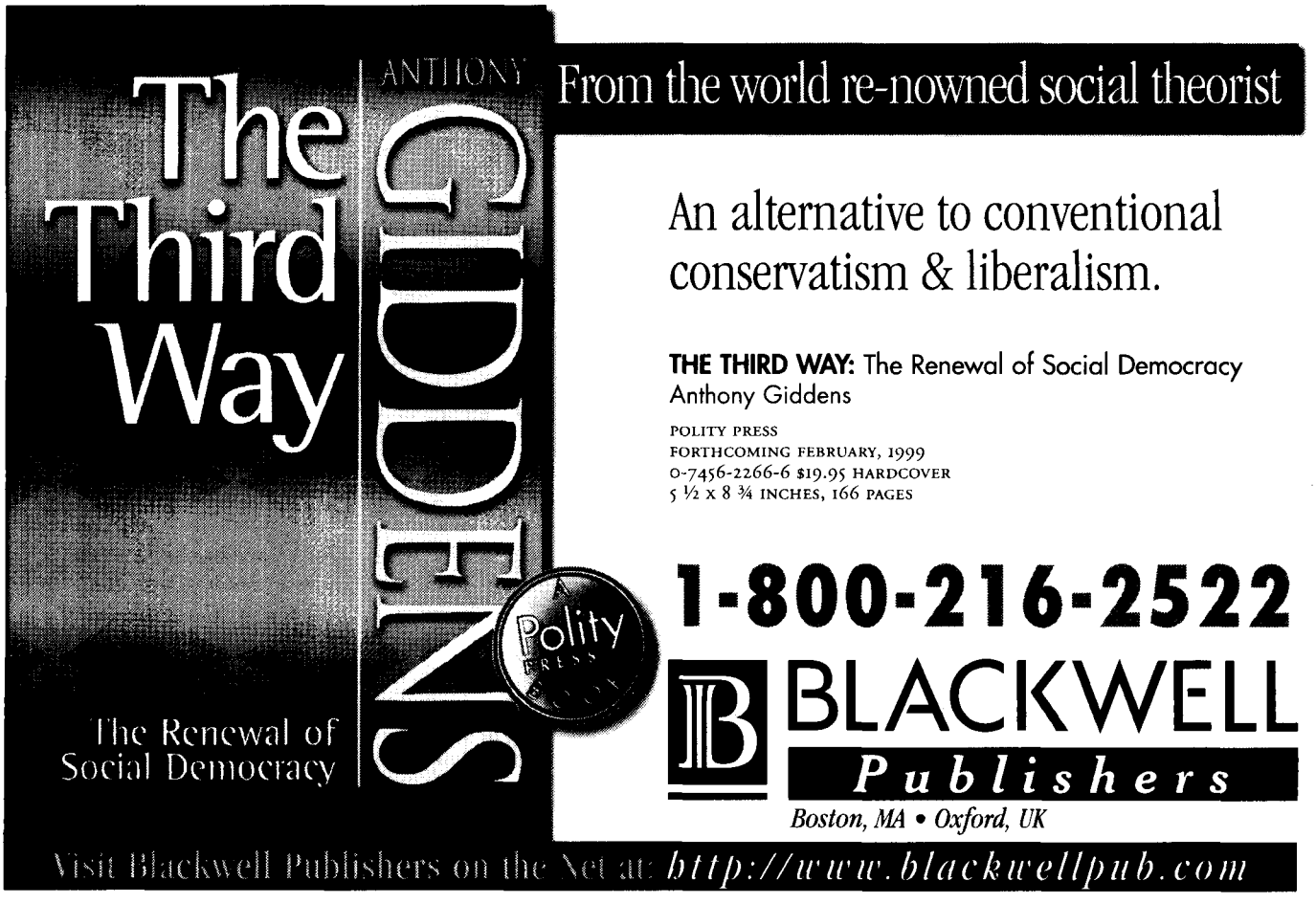
offer wisdom decidedly inferior to that found in novels. Forget about the seven habits, reengineering the corporation, and total quality management, Brawer suggests. Who cares what color your parachute is? You'll do better to pack *The Financier* in your carry-on for that sales conference in Phoenix, or skip the next executive retreat and go catch a performance of *Major Barbara* at the local community theater.

George Bernard Shaw has more to teach us than Stephen Covey. Brawer can hardly be blamed for the fact that this proposition needs arguing. And his unpretentious commitment to the practical value and the human interest of literature has understandably endeared him to some in the cultural establishment. *Fictions of Business* earned a warm review from *The New York Times*, and it boasts a glowing endorsement from Philip Gosset, Dean of Humanities at the University of Chicago

But will its message resonate in the business world? Will English departments merge with consulting firms? Will we be treated to late-night infomercials offering can't-lose formulas for instant wealth derived from the plays of David Mamet? On questions like these, Brawer demurs. Brawer the businessman insists that "the fictions of business give us the undreamed of competitive advantage of 20/20 hindsight." But this advantage is based on general wisdom about human affairs, rather than on specific insights into problems of management. "Unlike self-help, inspirational, and how-to manuals," he admits, his chosen fictions "dispense no advice; they preach no morals; they prescribe no rules." And this, one suspects, is what drew Brawer the English professor to them in the first place. They are, thank goodness, quite useless. Brawer may be a bra salesman, but he's no boob.

A.O. SCOTT



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BLACK SHEEP

THREE YEARS AGO, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF English Brian Evenson left Brigham Young University after his first book of short stories proved too hot for university authorities to handle. Now Evenson, who relocated to Oklahoma State University, is back with a novel, *Father of Lies* (Four Walls Eight Windows), that is as much an exposé of moral corruption in the Mormon Church as it is a psychological thriller.

Ironically, the short stories that got Evenson into trouble were also among the reasons he was first hired at BYU, his alma mater, in 1994. The collection, *Altmann's Tongue* (Knopf), was published in September of that year. In uninflected language reminiscent of Paul Bowles, Evenson's stories depicted cold-blooded murders without any moral repercussions. Despite its unsettling themes, the collection received favorable reviews from the few critics who took note of it.

Evenson has antagonists outside the Mormon Church.

But later that fall, a student—who wasn't even enrolled in any of Evenson's classes—sent an anonymous letter to the General Authority, the inner circle at the top of the Mormon hierarchy: It complained that Evenson's stories contained material inappropriate for a Mormon professor at BYU and that his book was a "showcase of graphic, disgusting, pointless violence."

In a Kafkaesque series of events that eventually earned BYU a censure from the American Association of University Professors, the author says he was given little chance to defend himself and his work. According to Evenson, BYU officers warned him his job would be in jeopardy if he published another "inappropriate" book. In a university where the connection to church leadership is unusually tight (the board of trustees is composed of representatives of the church's highest governing bodies), Evenson says he found officials closing ranks, leaving him on the outside. BYU disputes this account, saying that at his request, Evenson met with the university president and provost as well as his dean and department chair to discuss the matter. However, the university adds that "Evenson's book contains graphic depictions of extreme sadism, brutality, and gross degradation of women."

Evenson insists BYU was "interested not in explanations but in seeing that I didn't continue to write." At one point, he says, his department chair, Jay Fox, suggested that he move over to critical theory, another section in the English department where he had already taught classes, and leave creative writing workshops and his own fiction behind. In June 1995 Evenson resigned from Brigham Young, citing "restrictions which limit academic freedom," and moved on to Oklahoma State, where his primary responsibilities are in creative writing, though he continues to teach literature and theory classes.

Now comes *Father of Lies*, with glowing blurbs from the novelists Bradford Morrow and Beth Nugent, and a dust jacket photo that makes the thirty-two-year-old author look like a heavy metal guitarist. The story of a murderous pedophile who is a provost in the Corporation of the Blood of the Lamb, *Father of Lies* is a grotesque portrait of religious hypocrisy in an organization that bears a striking resemblance to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is hard to know who comes across as more evil in the book, Provost Fochs or the church that protects him. Fochs is a sick, deluded man, but the church authorities close ranks around him: They reason that if his superiors and God have selected him to be provost, then he isn't capable of terrible deeds. Narrated from his point of view, Fochs's crimes (rape, murder, and incest) have a dreamlike inevitability about them.

Evenson readily acknowledges the influence of his BYU experience on this book. "At BYU," he says, "I saw people who were willing to compromise their values to please the church. They would do something they didn't believe in, or lie." Evenson certainly takes his critique of the church to extremes. In *Father of Lies*, a psychiatrist who has been seeing Fochs is pressured by the church to turn over his papers and tapes; when he doesn't do so they are stolen from his office. Two female members of the church, mothers of boys the provost has molested, are excommunicated for standing by their accusations (which are indisputably true). When a member of the twelve-person Church Disciplinary Council resists the decision to excommunicate the boys' mothers, the accused Provost Fochs volunteers to step in for the lone dissenter, a suggestion that is quickly agreed to by the rector in charge of the council.

The novel's concerns with Mormon hypocrisy reflect Evenson's own doubts about the faith. Once a devout believer who wrote the libretto for an opera based on the life of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, and who even after his departure from BYU staunchly proclaimed himself a Mormon, Evenson is today more ambivalent. He admits he hasn't attended church regularly over the past year. "The structure bothers me. There are some good teachings, but I don't know if they can stand alone, and if not, I'm not interested." Nonetheless, he says, "I'd like to think, despite the nature of the material, that my belief is present in all my work—even work that has no clear connection to Mormonism—at a very deep level, like a kind of

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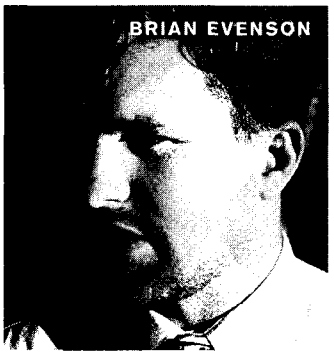
syntax." In fact, Evenson's novel can be read as a desperate act of tough love on his part: a single man screaming at an institution that appears constitutionally incapable of incorporating criticism.

Regardless of whether *Father of Lies* provokes controversy as expected, Evenson has other antagonists outside the Mormon Church. Not long after he left BYU, he became embroiled in a testy battle over the literary legacy of the late Raymond Carver—a controversy that eventually made its way onto the cover of *The New York Times Magazine*. Like Carver, Evenson had been a protégé of the legendary New York fiction editor Gordon Lish, who published eleven of his short stories in his journal *The Quarterly* and served as the editor of *Altmann's Tongue*. In July 1995, after hearing rumors of Lish's aggressive editing of Carver's early work, Evenson visited Indiana University's Lilly Library, where Lish's papers are housed, and found that Lish's editorial interventions in Carver's reputation-making early stories were indeed considerable, often extending beyond what is normally thought of as editing. Lish, Evenson found, cut huge portions from the stories and liberally rewrote other parts. Evenson submitted an essay based on his research to James Plath, the editor of the forthcoming *Critical Essays on Raymond Carver* (Macmillan). Eventually, he received a letter from lawyers representing Carver's estate warning him that his quotations from Carver's work violated the estate's copyright—and a rejection from Plath.



Was the rejection of Evenson's article an attempted cover-up on the part of Carver's defenders? Or was Evenson's work, as Plath later told *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, not up to snuff? Or was Evenson a pawn in a backdoor power play by Lish? Evenson denies that Lish had anything to do with his research and stands by the work he produced. But he doesn't appear to relish the struggles it has provoked. When asked whether he will ever publish his findings on Carver and Lish, he says he doesn't rule out the possibility, but in a weary tone admits he has lost his taste for the project. Still, one wonders if his next novel might not depict authors, editors, and the conservators of literary reputations in terms no more flattering than his depiction of the Mormon Church in *Father of Lies*.

DALLAS CROW

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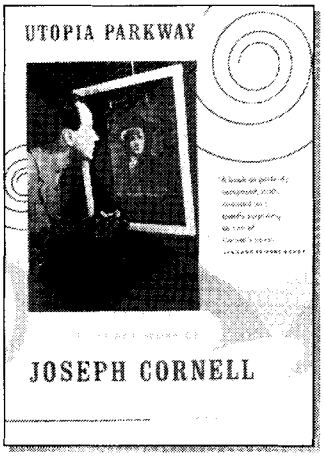

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BRAINWASHED!

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY SOCIOLOGY PROfessor Benjamin Zablocki has been studying cults—now called, thanks to academic political correctness, new religious movements, or NRMs—since his graduate school days at Johns Hopkins during the mid-1960s, when he bought a ninety-nine dollar Greyhound bus pass and traveled around the country visiting all the religious communes he could find. "My style of research is participant observation," he explains. "I live with the groups, wash dishes with them, pray with them, and immerse myself in their way of life."

After years of intimate encounters with a variety of religious groups, one recurrent phenomenon stood out. "I saw people going through a very peculiar experience," Zablocki recalls. "They would lose weight and withdraw. You couldn't have a conversation with them—they seemed to be in a different world."

At first Zablocki believed that the troubled cult members he talked to were experiencing spiritual crises—"the dark night of the soul, like Saint Teresa or Saint John of the Cross." But after reading Robert Lifton's *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* (1961) and Edgar Schein's *Coercive Persuasion* (1961), famous studies of the mind control and "reeducation" practiced by the Chinese on, among other groups, American prisoners of war captured in the Korean conflict, Zablocki embraced another explanation: brainwashing. Lifton's and Schein's theories of prisoner brainwashing—a process that entailed sensory deprivation, the extraction of confessions, and complete control of the prisoners' environment as a means of manipulating them to share their captors' outlook and do their captors' will—struck him as an apt description of the behavior he'd observed among the theoretically voluntary members of religious groups. From group to group, Zablocki's subjects had reported undergoing rituals more reminiscent of a prison camp than of your average Sunday school: They were deprived of sleep; they were asked to write confessions; they were told their confessions were not adequate.

Zablocki's conversion to brainwashing theory may sound like common sense to a public brought up on TV images of zombielike cultists committing fiendish crimes or on the Chinese mind control experiments dramatized in the 1962 film *The Manchurian Candidate*. But among

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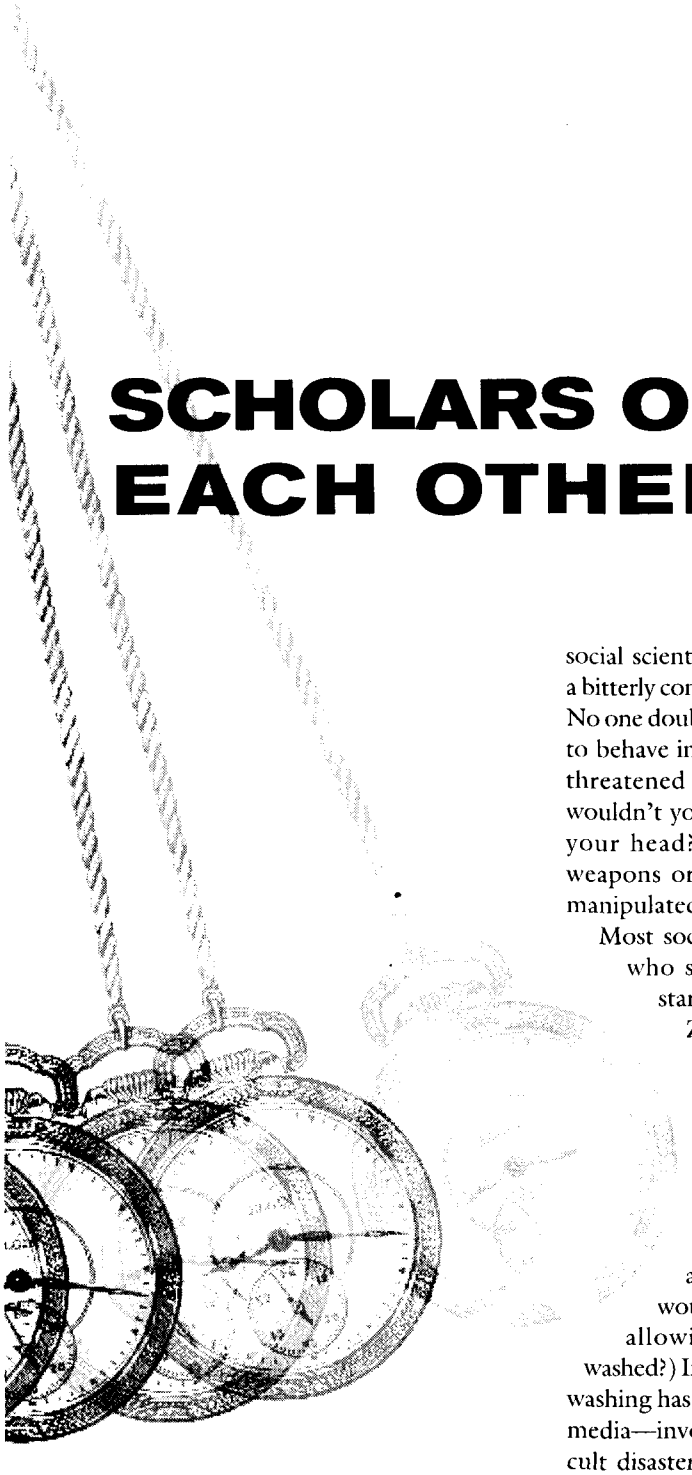

SCHOLARS OF CULTS ACCUSE EACH OTHER OF BAD FAITH

BY **CHARLOTTE ALLEN**

social scientists, brainwashing has been a bitterly contested theory for some time. No one doubts that a person can be made to behave in particular ways when he is threatened with physical force (what wouldn't you do with a gun pressed to your head?), but in the absence of weapons or torture, can a person be manipulated against his will?

Most sociologists and psychologists who study cults think not. For starters, brainwashing isn't, as Zablocki himself admits, "a process that is directly observable." And even if brainwashing could be isolated and measured in a clinical trial, ethical objections make conducting such a test almost unthinkable. (What sort of waivers would you have to sign before allowing yourself to be brainwashed?) In the last decade, while brainwashing has enjoyed a high profile in the media—invoked to explain sensational cult disasters from the mass suicide of Heaven's Gate members to the twelve sarin deaths on the Tokyo subway attributed to the Aum Shinrikyo cult—social scientists have shunned the the term as a symptom of Cold War paranoia and anticult hysteria. Instead, they favor more benign explanations of cult membership. Alternatives include "labeling" theory, which argues there is simply nothing sinister about alternative religions, that the problem is one of prejudicial labeling on the part of a mainstream culture that sees cult members as brainwashed dupes, and "preexisting condition" theory, which posits that cult members are people who are mentally ill or otherwise maladjusted *before* they join. (A couple of scholars have even proposed malnutrition as a preexisting condition, arguing that calcium deficiency may make people prone to charismatic susceptibility.)

Thus, when Zablocki published an indignant two-part, sixty-page defense of brainwashing theory in the October 1997 and April 1998 issues of *Nova Religio,* a scholarly journal devoted to alternative belief systems, he ignited a furor in the field. Pointing to the "high exit costs" that some cults exacted from those who tried to defect—shunning, forfeiture of parental rights and property, and veiled threats—Zablocki argued that these were indications of brainwashing, signs that some groups were using psychological coercion to maintain total control over their members. Although he admitted he could not prove brainwashing empirically, he argued that at the very least brainwashing should not be dismissed out of hand. "It is not my aim...to claim that we currently

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possess evidence proving that brainwashing is the best explanation of commitment to NRMs," he wrote. "It is my more modest aim to show that brainwashing is a precise and empirically testable conjecture about a very important social-psychological process that has been treated shabbily by majority opinion within the sociology of religion."

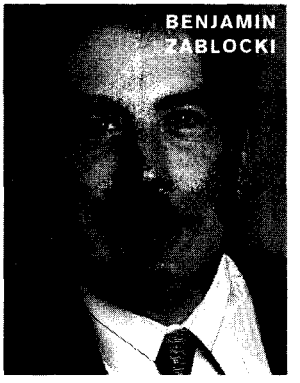
Zablocki's colleagues were unimpressed. In a response also published in *Nova Religio,* David Bromley, a sociologist at Virginia Commonwealth University who has studied the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, complained that in Zablocki's formulation brainwashing remained a vague, slippery, limiting, and ultimately untestable concept. Moreover, he pointed out, cults typically have low recruitment success, high turnover rates (recruits typically leave after a few months, and hardly anyone lasts longer than two years), and short life spans, all grounds for serious skepticism about the brainwashing hypothesis. Even if you overlook these facts, Bromley added, "the extraordinarily varied cultural origins, patterns of organizational development, and leadership styles of such groups pose a problem in explaining how they seem to have discovered the same 'brainwashing' psycho-technology at almost precisely the same historical moment."

A quick survey of the field reveals that Bromley is far from being the only doubter. Eileen Barker, a sociologist at the London School of Economics who has also studied the Unification Church, says, "People regularly leave the Moonies of their own free will. The cults are actually less efficient at retaining their members than other social groups. They put a lot of pressure on them to stay in—love-bombing, guilt trips—but it doesn't work. They'd like to brainwash them, but they can't."

ACRIMONY

is typical of exchanges within the field of cult scholarship—one of the most divided in academe. Separated by ideology, training, and disciplinary history, the sociologists and psychologists who study cults confront each other over an enormous—some would say unbridgeable—cultural gulf. And the debate often gets personal. Though there are some recent signs of rapprochement, scholarly antagonists have frequently sought to discredit each other's motives as well as their research. Competing to define the nature of cults, they have fought for control of their professional associations and quarreled bitterly in the courtroom.

"The field has been completely polarized," observes Thomas Robbins, an independent sociologist of religion in Rochester, Minnesota. He explains: "You have the people, mostly sociologists of religion or people in religious studies, who tend to look at cults interpretively, from the point of view of their members. They get labeled as cult apologists. And there are those who view cults as fundamentally destructive—they're mostly psychologists and social workers—and they get labeled as cult bashers. Most books on the subject take one side or the other, and the scholars on either side don't read each other's books."


BENJAMIN ZABLOCKI

The word "cult" is itself a bone of scholarly contention, a term first used to describe religious movements that did not fall into German sociologist Max Weber's classification of churches (organizations open to anyone born or baptized into them) and sects (separatist subgroups that demanded theological or moral purity as a condition of membership). In the view of most sociologists loyalty to a charismatic leader over adherence to a particular theology is one feature that distinguishes a cult from a sect. (Another defining feature is the tendency of cults to encapsulate or embed at least some of their members in a way of life and set of group values that are radically at odds with the surrounding culture.)

"New religious movement" is a term of relatively recent vintage, a value-neutral designation coined in the wake of disasters like Jonestown and Waco as an effort by social scientists to distance themselves from popular anticult prejudice. In fact, the term is misleading: Many of the belief systems promoted by NRMs are not new at all but are eccentric offshoots of Christianity or the even more ancient Buddhism and Hinduism. Furthermore, some cults, such as Scientology, est, and Lifespring Inc., have minimal religious content and might be more accurately defined as secular therapy or self-realization organizations. (Even so, in 1993 Scientology won the Internal Revenue Service's designation as a church.)

To further complicate matters, researchers often bring very different, even conflicting approaches to their work. Psychologists, for example, tend to emphasize how a repeated environmental stimulus can elicit a conditioned response—depriving subjects of their autonomy. Sociologists, by contrast, typically endorse a voluntarist conversion model for religion, which posits that people join cults for generally rational reasons connected to the group's ability to satisfy their needs: for a transcendent theology; for strong bonds of kinship and solidarity; for enough social support to enable them to quit drugs or otherwise turn their personal lives around. (For example, one study has shown that schizophrenics who joined cults functioned better than those who tried drugs or conventional psychotherapy.)

ALL OF

these differences might have been merely academic were it not for the enduring popularity of cults themselves. By the end of the 1960s, contrary to the expectations of many secular academics, strange, radically separatist religious groups were beginning to proliferate. They attracted large numbers of recruits, often among young people from affluent families who had grown up without any religious beliefs. Horrified middle-class parents watched their college-educated children shinny down the social ladder to sell flowers on the street with the Moonies, shave their heads and beg with the Hare Krishna, or distribute Jesus-movement pamphlets on the subways. The media reported spurts of cult violence and instances of young people handing over large sums of money to the new religions.

Most alarming of all for parents, many of the cults enforced a rigid communal life that required members to cut off all ties to their pasts, including contact with their families. In response, there was a wave of deprogramming during the 1970s and 1980s: Young cult members were kidnapped, usually by freelance specialists hired by their parents, and held prisoner until they disavowed their cult

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"PEOPLE REGULARLY LEAVE THE MOONIES OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL," SAYS EILEEN BARKER. "THE CULTS WOULD LIKE TO BRAINWASH THEM, BUT THEY CAN'T."

affiliation and beliefs. Some parents even tried to have their adult children deprogrammed out of Roman Catholic convents and evangelical Christian churches. The American Civil Liberties Union and other civil libertarians objected strenuously to deprogramming on the grounds that most of the recipients were legal adults, but the practice had the blessing of the Cult Awareness Network and other anticult groups. Moreover, judges in California, a bellwether state for legal trends, began allowing parents to obtain conservatorships over their adult children who had joined cults on the presumption that they were mentally incompetent, paving the way for the deprogrammers to move in.

Academics played a major role in the battles that ensued. In order to prove mental incompetence, the lawyers for the parents had to show that the young people had not joined the cults voluntarily. In the 1970s and 1980s, the thought-reform studies of Lifton and Schein suddenly found lucrative new life in the courtroom.

Two of the most prominent advocates of the mind-control hypothesis were sociologist Richard Ofshe and psychologist Margaret Singer, both affiliated with UC-Berkeley at the time. The two began hiring themselves out as expert witnesses on behalf of former cult members and their parents in several lawsuits brought against religious cults and secular therapy organizations, like Lifespring. Testifying to the reality of "coercive persuasion," the two social scientists managed to snag a large portion of the expert-witness business in brainwashing cases. "In the thought-reform prisons in China, people were physically coerced into staying in that environment," says Ofshe. "I think there are other things that can stand in the place of physical coercion, for example, misrepresentation that results in their believing that the cult is something other than what it is. You have to look at what occurs in the context of the group: exploiting one's desires, one's weaknesses. I've seen groups where people who were blemish-free were manipulated into acts of violence and terrorism."

In the early 1980s, Ofshe and Singer's brainwashing arguments proved persuasive to judges, juries, and the public. With horrific images of the Jonestown mass suicides and murders fresh in their minds, American juries were hostile to cults. Former cult members began winning multimillion-dollar jury verdicts against the religious movements to which they had belonged. In 1980 the New York state legislature, over objections from the American Civil Liberties Union, passed a bill that would have legalized deprogramming (it was vetoed by Governor Hugh Carey). "With deprogramming—with parents having their children abducted and held captive—the whole thing became intensely emotional," says Thomas Robbins. "Who were the kidnappers: the parents, the cults, or the police? There were hard feelings on both sides."

Among the most outraged were social scientists who had never believed that people could be brainwashed into joining cults and who, as good civil libertarians, were appalled by deprogramming. Ofshe and Singer's scholarly testimony (and fat fees) distressed a number of these scholars, whose credentials were equally respectable and whose own research had led them to conclude that coercive persuasion was impossible in the absence of some sort of physical coercion such as prison or torture. "There clearly are groups that order people to kill," concedes David Bromley. "There's Aum, there was the

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Rajneesh, where they put botulism in the salad bar, there was Synanon, where they put a rattlesnake in someone's mailbox. But in the end, the dispute over brainwashing isn't a legal matter; it's a political dispute over the legitimacy of high-demand religions. One side says: Don't encapsulate your members so much. The other side says: Don't demonize dissent from the prevailing norms."

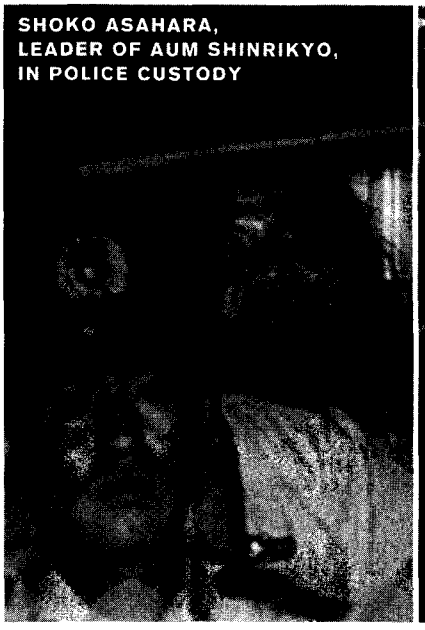
Bromley believes that Ofshe and Singer's testimony encourages judges and jurors to leap too quickly to the conclusion that alternative religions are threats to individual freedom and traditional values. According to their logic, was the early Christian church a dangerous cult as well? Did Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John need deprogramming?

ZABLOCKI

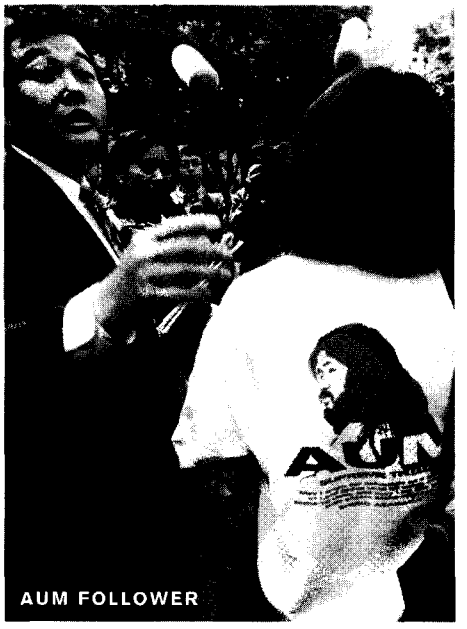
also regards Ofshe and Singer's testimony with skepticism, but for different reasons. "It usually takes months, even years to arrive at a full, uncompromising commitment to a cult," he explains. "It's then that the brainwashing can occur. In the Ofshe-Singer model, brainwashing takes place at the very beginning. I think very highly of Ofshe's work, but I don't agree with his thinking on some things." Furthermore, Zablocki adds, "I've always refused requests to serve as an expert witness. I wouldn't trust myself as a scholar when one side or the other side of a legal case is supplementing my income."

In his article in *Nova Religio*, Zablocki was worried less about those academics who may stretch the brainwashing concept than about those, like Bromley, who reject it altogether. And in advancing his case, he took a hard look at such scholars' intentions and tactics. (His title is deliberately provocative: "The Blacklisting of a Concept: The Strange History of the Brainwashing Conjecture in the Sociology of Religion.") Not content merely to defend the brainwashing theory as viable social science, Zablocki argued that its degraded status in the profession had as much to do with the compromised attitudes of the scholars who studied cults as with inherent flaws in the theory itself. Brainwashing, Zablocki contended, had gone out of style in sociology not because it had been disproved scientifically but because the majority of scholars of alternative religions had crossed the line from objectivity to apology for the groups they researched. "The harm of squelching a form of free religious expression," he concluded, "seems to many to be a far greater danger than any harm that might come to members of NRMs or their children."

ZABLOCKI ARGUES THAT MANY SCHOLARS HAVE DISCARDED THE BRAINWASHING THEORY TOO HASTILY.



SHOKO ASAHARA, LEADER OF AUM SHINRIKYO, IN POLICE CUSTODY



AUM FOLLOWER

Although most scholars tend to be candid about cults' bizarre practices—studies of the Unification Church do not omit the mass weddings arranged between strangers, the pressure to procreate, or Moon's self-centric theology—too many sociologists, Zablocki wrote, downplay reports of defectors, on the theory that members who leave in anger have axes to grind. Such scholars, he contended, are more interested in "marginalizing opposing points of view" than in "collecting data and testing hypotheses."

In the same issue of *Nova Religio*, Robbins addressed some of these complaints in a "friendly critique" aimed at other cult-friendly scholars in his own camp. While critical of the government's handling of the Waco incident, which resulted in the deaths of seventy-six members of the Branch Davidian cult and four federal agents in 1993, Robbins faulted religion scholars for glossing over the group's lethal response to the raid by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. "Although both persecution and sectarian nastiness clearly exist," Robbins wrote, "objective scholars may need to surrender any permanent investment in seeing the 'cult' or 'new religion' as either a victim or a destructive demon."

Zablocki made another, potentially more damning charge, however—one that Robbins did not take up. A significant amount of cult money, he wrote, has gone to scholars—in support of research, publication, conference participation, and other services. Zablocki did not name names. But a number of professors freely admit that nontraditional religions (in most cases, the Unificationists and Scientologists) have cut them checks. The list includes some of the most prominent scholars in the discipline: Bromley, Barker, Rodney Stark of the University of Washington, Jeffrey Hadden of the University of Virginia, and James Richardson, a sociologist of religion at the University of Nevada at Reno. All five have attended cult-subsidized conferences, and Bromley, Hadden, and Richardson have occasionally testified in court on behalf of cults or offered their services as expert witnesses against brainwashing theory. "This is an issue," Zablocki wrote sternly, "of a whole different ethical magnitude from that of taking research funding from the Methodists to find out

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why the collection baskets are not coming back as heavy as they used to."

JUSTIFICATIONS

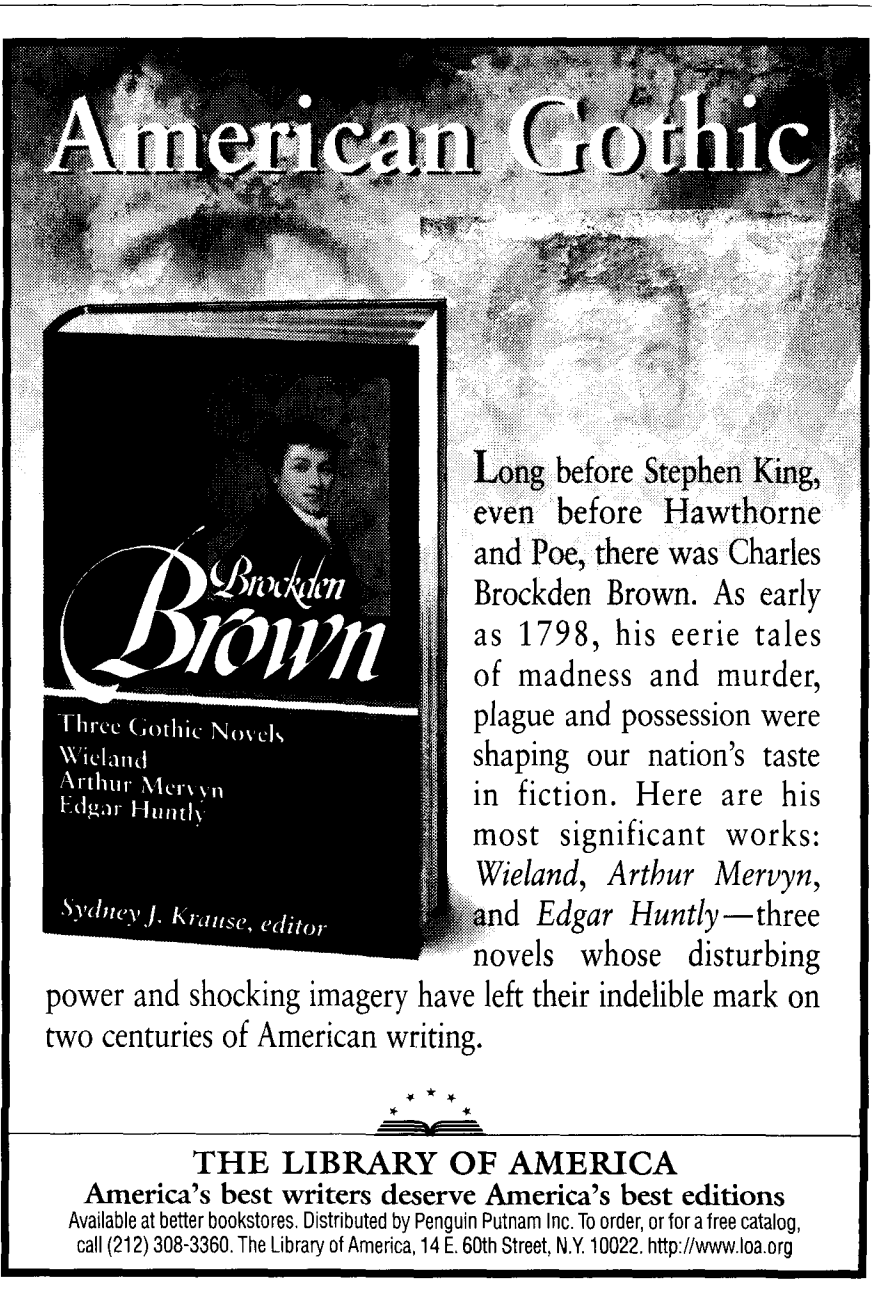
for accepting benefits from fringe faiths vary: "I can't be bought with a free conference." "Don't scholars in many fields serve as consultants and expert witnesses?" And outside research grants for scholarship on alternative religions are difficult to obtain. Until recently, the government has funded very few cult studies, and private foundations that support religious scholarship—such as the Lilly Endowment and the Pew Charitable Trusts—prefer to pay for studies of more conventional churches. "Sure, I spent three days on a boat in the San Juan Islands with Eileen Barker and some other people—it was a conference on religious movements, and we had a great time, and the Moonies paid for it," says Stark. "But I've gone to plenty of conferences paid for by Jewish organizations and Catholic organizations. The first big study I ever did, on religion and anti-Semitism, was a book for the Anti-Defamation League. I never felt that it was Jewish money. So I'm not so worried about that."

Jeffrey Hadden once organized a Unification Church–sponsored conference on religion and politics in Hilton Head, South Carolina, and published the papers with a Unification Church–owned press. He explains: "There are all these anticultists, and they begin with the presumption that every religious movement is illegitimate, so anything you say is all right if it undermines the group. I say that religious freedom is a fundamental right. Are there things that happen in these groups that I don't approve of? Have I pointed it out? You bet I have! Have some scholars gotten too close to the groups they study? Of course—if you study a group to understand the world through their eyes, you will understand the world through their eyes. It's a real difficulty."

Hadden insists that the Moonie money had no effect on his scholarship and that he eventually lost favor with some of the Unificationists. His fall from grace was partly because he said unflattering things about them in his papers and partly because he refused to sign a petition protesting the 1980 New York state legislation that would have legalized deprogramming. "I stood up at a conference and said, 'Absolutely not!'" Hadden recalls. "But I reject the notion that our job as sociologists is to be watchdogs. Our job is to understand these groups so that there can be civil discourse about them, not bitter division."

In fact, Hadden and his colleagues have frequently gone beyond understanding alternative religions into seeking to help them with their legal problems. Much of that activity has been inspired by their efforts to combat the anti-cult testimony of Ofshe and Singer, which they believe has been used to demonize alternative world views and deprive adults of their religious liberty. Inspired by a meeting of cult scholars and representatives from the Unification Church and the National Council of Churches, Hadden composed a memo in December 1989 that was aimed at counteracting the academic legitimacy of the brainwashing concept—as well as, implicitly, the expert witness status of Ofshe, Singer, and others.

Hadden's memo, to which he attached Bromley's and Barker's names without their consent, suggested that the Unification Church and other nontraditional religions set up a foundation to fund research and help in "neutralizing anti-cult movements" such as the Cult Awareness Network and the Florida-based American Family Foundation. Hadden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recognized that the Constitution's church-state provisions precluded federal funding for such an organization; therefore he urged the creation a privately supported "legal resource center" to be funded initially with contributions from "individuals and groups targeted as probable primary users of the material"—in other words, lawyers and their cult clients.

"At that time two individuals were having a barnstorm of a good time in court," says Hadden, referring to Ofshe and Singer. "They misrepresented themselves and the state of knowledge in the discipline. Every time they turned around, they were winning court decisions. I said, 'Do we have an obligation to jump in and say that the state of the knowledge is not what they say?' Of course we did."

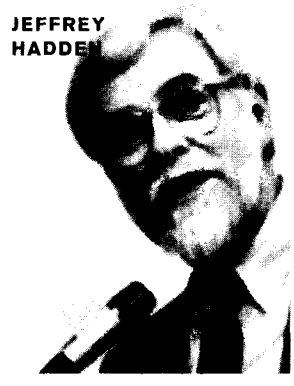
That obligation has been fulfilled.

A SURPRISING NUMBER OF SCHOLARS HAVE ACCEPTED FUNDS OR FREEBIES FROM THE CULTS THEY STUDY.

IN ONE

long-running legal drama, cult-friendly scholars even went so far as to persuade national academic organizations to join—however briefly—their cause. The drama lasted a decade, and by the time it subsided, both sides were behaving in ways that seemed, well, almost cultish.

The conflict began in 1980, when David Molko and Tracy Leal, who had briefly belonged to the Northern California branch of the Unification Church, sued the Moonie group for fraud and intentional infliction of emotional distress. Recruiters had brought Molko, then age twenty-seven, and Leal, then age nineteen, into the cult during the late 1970s by inviting them to communal dinners without revealing the identity of their organization. As was Moonie practice at the time, only after Molko and Leal were well along in a training program in a remote area did they learn what church they had joined. Both were eventually kidnapped by deprogrammers hired by their parents, at which point they recanted their beliefs and filed their lawsuit. Molko also sought return of the $6,000 he had given the Unificationists when he joined.


JEFFREY HADDEN

The allegation of deception fit the Ofshe-Singer brainwashing theory, and the lawyers who represented Molko and Leal hired Singer, along with a psychiatrist, to testify that the Unificationists had systematically misled and manipulated the two

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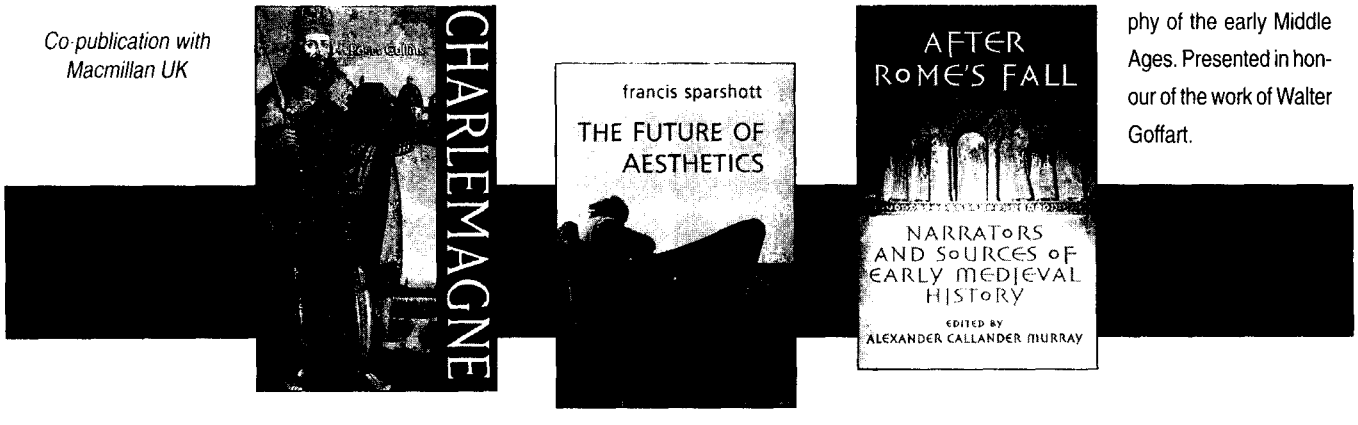

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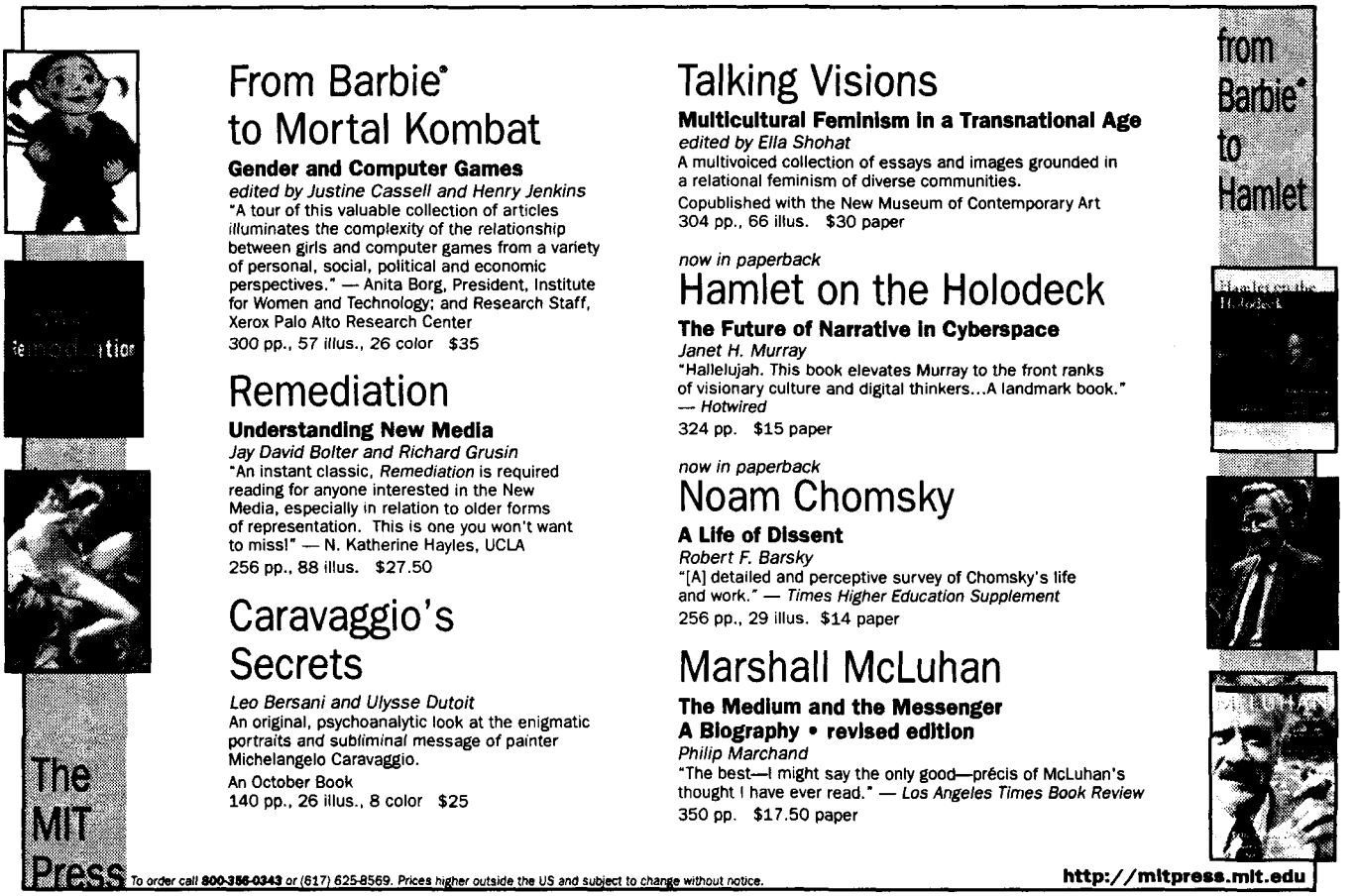
young people into joining their organization. The judge refused to let the case go to trial, arguing that there was no evidence brainwashing had occurred. Molko and Leal appealed the decision, but failed to convince an intermediate-level appeals court to overturn the ruling.

Still, the plaintiffs persevered, and when the California Supreme Court heard the case in 1988, it ruled that the case could go to trial after all. Because there were such "differing views" among social scientists on the theory of coercive persuasion, the court declared, the question of whether Molko and Leal had joined the church of their own free will was ultimately a factual one for a trial jury to determine. Hence, the expert witnesses could testify to aid the jury. The Unificationists promptly filed a petition to have the U.S. Supreme Court review the case on the grounds that constitutional guarantees of religious freedom preclude inquiries into the recruiting practices of religious groups.

Even before the case got to the California high court, the cult-friendly sociologist James Richardson began meeting with other social scientists and a Moonie lawyer to develop a strategy for defeating the Ofshe-Singer brainwashing theory. Richardson was not on the Unification payroll, but his name was on a list of expert witnesses whom the church intended to call if the case ever got to trial. Richardson's group decided to lobby the American Psychological Association (APA), Singer's own professional organization, to file a friend-of-the-court brief declaring that brainwashing theory was not generally accepted by the scientific community. Richardson and his allies eventually secured approval from the APA's board of directors to file a brief on the case with the organization's name attached. This was highly unusual: Most scholarly organizations do not take official positions on theories under debate, especially when there might be implications for public policy. A number of individual scholars also agreed to lend their names to the brief, including the cult-friendly Stark as well as the preeminent religion scholar Martin Marty of the University of Chicago.

Richardson's victory was short-lived, however. After protests lodged by Singer and several other psychologists, the APA withdrew its name from the brief—even before the California high court issued its ruling. Because the case was now on its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, Richardson and the others tried the same tactic with two other professional organizations, the American Sociological Association (ASA) and the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR). The SSSR's board voted to endorse the brief, but the ASA's executive director signed it on his association's behalf without submitting it to the board, a procedural irregularity. The brief (whose language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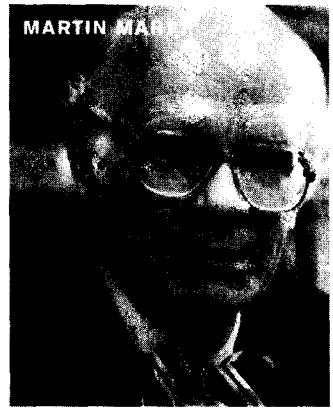
IN ONE LONG-RUNNING LEGAL DRAMA, CULT SCHOLARS PERSUADED LEADING NATIONAL ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONS TO JOIN THEIR CAUSE.

differed slightly from the original APA brief) emphatically declared that there was "no evidence" in the scholarly literature to support the theory that fraud and manipulation could amount to the same thing as physical force. This time the protest came from Ofshe and like-minded sociologists, and the ASA board voted to take its name off the brief. (The SSSR also eventually took a more non-committal stance, passing a resolution in 1990 stating that "further appropriate research is necessary" to reach a scholarly consensus on brainwashing.)

By this time, the U.S. Supreme Court had declined to review the case. So, rather than let it proceed to trial, the Unification Church decided to settle with Molko and Leal out of court. Even though Ofshe and Singer did not testify in the case, it was a significant victory for them.

But if this was a highpoint of their careers, the lowpoint was soon to come. In 1990 the cult-friendly scholars secured a victory against Singer and Ofshe in a federal criminal case in California. A man named Stephen Fishman had been charged in 1988 with eleven counts of fraudulently obtaining settlement money in shareholder class-action suits by posing as an injured member of an affected class. His lawyer planned to have Singer and Ofshe testify that the Church of Scientology, to which Fishman had belonged for several years, had brainwashed him into believing that he was above the law. It was a novel legal defense: The cults made me do it.



The court was unpersuaded, however. Noting that the "scientific community has resisted the Singer-Ofshe thesis applying coercive persuasion to religious cults," the judge in the Fishman case rejected expert testimony on the matter.

For Singer and Ofshe, the negative decision in the Fishman case set a precedent that meant the end of their lucrative sideline in providing expert testimony in criminal court. But that wasn't their last word. Outraged, they were

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determined to retaliate. Alleging that Richardson and other cult-friendly scholars had manipulated the APA and the ASA into taking positions against the brainwashing theory, Singer and Ofshe filed a federal civil suit in New York City under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act in 1992. The suit named as defendants the APA and the ASA, as well as numerous individuals connected with writing the Molko-Leal briefs. Treating those staid, scholarly organizations as though they were the Mafia (which was the original target of the RICO law), the suit alleged a complex conspiracy involving the APA and the ASA's statements in the Molko-Leal case; various pieces of correspondence among the parties that reflected negatively on Ofshe and Singer; and a 1987 rejection by the APA of a task force report authored by Singer and critical of the Unification Church.

The suit never came to trial. A federal judge issued a lengthy opinion concluding that although the suit alleged a number of "seemingly overly zealous efforts" on the part of the cult-friendly scholars, a RICO action was not a proper forum for airing disputes over the merits of the theory of coercive persuasion. Ofshe and Singer then filed a second lawsuit in a California state court against most of the same group of defendants. This suit alleged conspiracy, intentional misrepresentation, and defamation, and charged that certain pro-cult scholars had further mischaracterized the Ofshe-Singer brainwashing theories in articles and papers presented to professional organizations. Soon enough, that second suit was dead as well, dismissed in a one-page 1994 decision by Judge James R. Lamden stating that the First Amendment protected debates over "matters both professional and academic." Lamden ordered Ofshe and Singer to pay the various defendants $80,000 in attorneys' fees under California's SLAPP suit law, which penalizes those who harass others for exercising their First Ammendment rights.

For Singer and Ofshe, the itch to litigate persists. "We are suing our lawyer, Michael Flomenhaft, for malpractice," says Singer. "There was no First Amendment issue in this case. We were saying that the APA and the ASA had been co-opted."

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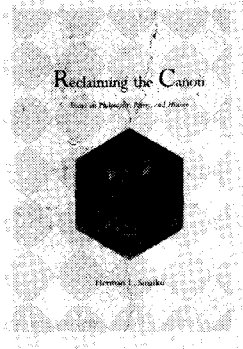

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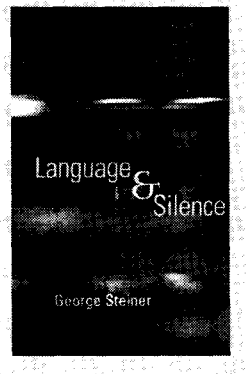

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THE UGLY MUTUAL

recriminations over the Molko-Leal lawsuit probably marked the lowest point of the cult wars. Though no scholarly faction won a decisive court ruling on the question of expert testimony, lately there are signs that the academic standoff is ending. The dust from the latest skirmish—sparked by Zablocki's provocative 1997 defense of brainwashing theory—is beginning to settle, revealing a scholarly community making tentative steps toward reconciliation.

Developments outside academe have helped: While membership is increasing in some cults, many others are in decline. The Unification Church, for example, has lost members over the last decade and is unwilling or unable to finance expensive conferences and books or pay for favorable court testimony. Deprogramming has been abandoned in favor of exit counseling for those who choose to leave cults voluntarily, and the legal system is much less sympathetic to parents who would like to remove adult children from cults and wrest huge damage awards from NRMs.

Inside academe, exchanges among cult scholars show signs of becoming more collegial. Zablocki and Robbins are collaborating on a collection of papers from scholars on both sides of the cult conflict (including Bromley and Richardson), to be published by the University of Toronto Press in 1999. They hope the volume will include the first balanced debate over brainwashing since cult and brainwashing theory first surfaced during the 1960s.

"We've all been a little blind to each other's concerns," says Zablocki, expressing the field's new mood of rapprochement. "The bashers tend not to see the potential harm to religion as a whole from what they do, and the apologists tend to be so worried about religious persecution that they ignore the harm that some religions have done. A lot of the scholarship that's been done in this field has been in the context of litigation, and that's not a very good way to do scholarship."

Charlotte Allen is a contributing editor of *Lingua Franca* and the author of *The Human Christ: The Search for the Historical Jesus* (Free Press). Her article, "As Bad As It Gets," appeared in the March 1998 *LF*.

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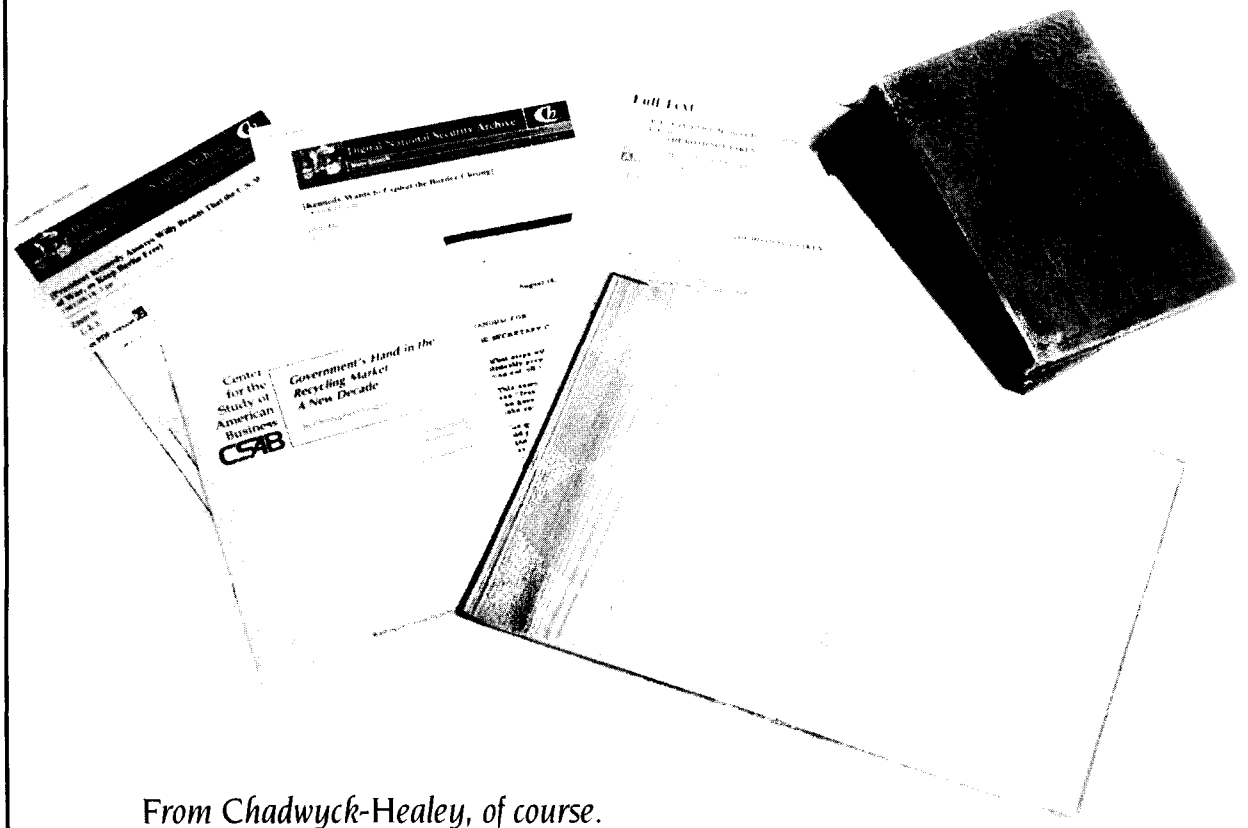

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TOTEM AND TABOO

THE NEW BERLIN STRUGGLES TO BUILD A HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

BY **MICHAEL Z. WISE**

INSIDE JAMES YOUNG'S WHITE CLAPboard colonial house in Amherst, Massachusetts, hangs a framed image of Nazi troops goose-stepping past the Brandenburg Gate. The stylized photograph by contemporary artist David Levinthal—the soldiers in this picture are actually toylike figurines—is a jarring presence in the otherwise serene living room. But Young, a professor of English and Judaic studies at the University of Massachusetts, has an unusually intimate relationship with the traumas of the German past. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that this judicious forty-six-year-old American academic has the power to cast Germany's memory of the Holocaust in stone. For the past two years, Young has been providing aesthetic and moral guidance to the German government as it struggles to build a national Holocaust memorial in Berlin. The director of the German Historical Museum has likened him to a family therapist for a troubled nation.

This is especially ironic since Young has written widely on the perils of monument building and once took unconcealed delight in what he called the "spectacle of Germany's self-flagellation" over its decade-long struggle to build the memorial. He has admitted to "making a fine career out of skepticism" about the efficacy of any nation's bid to preserve memory in built imagery. But now the skeptic of monuments has become an advocate. And the monument Young is supporting is hardly uncontroversial. Under his eyes, the debate over what kind of memorial Germany should build to the Jews it slaughtered half a century ago has turned into a contentious political and cultural drama with a shifting cast of unlikely allies and antagonists—including an avant-garde New York architect, a conservative chancellor who overstayed his welcome in power, and Germany's leading novelist. Positions have changed; proposals have been advanced, abandoned, and modified. Nobody in official German circles seems to know much about public art, but everyone seems to know what they don't like. In the middle of it all has been the professor from Massachusetts.

THE IDEA for a Holocaust memorial in the city where the crime was organized dates back to 1988, a year before the Berlin Wall came down. The initial drive

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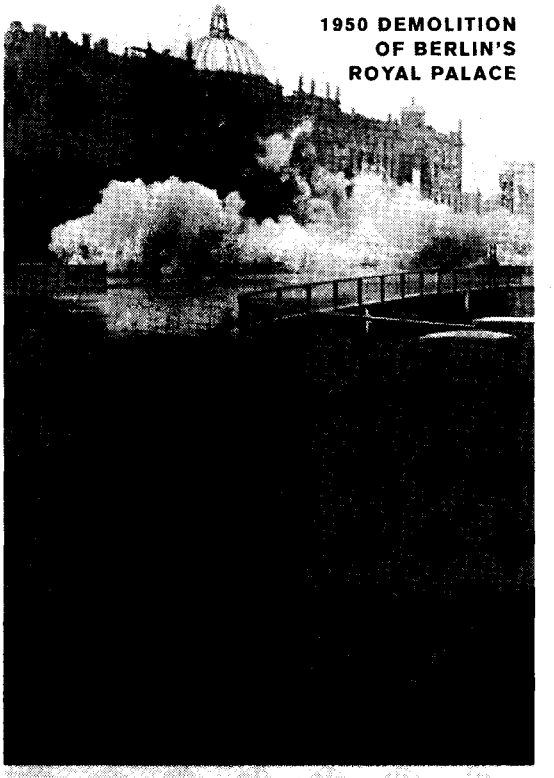
was spearheaded by a prominent television journalist named Lea Rosh, who created an umbrella group of intellectuals, cultural figures, and civic and business leaders to raise private funds for the memorial's construction. The group originally envisioned a monument, a "Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe," to be built on or near the site of the former Gestapo headquarters. But in the wake of the decision to establish Berlin as the capital of a reunited Germany, German politicians decided that the memorial should have a more prominent place in the city's new landscape. The federal government designated a new site for the project—an entire city block just south of the Brandenburg Gate, close to the location of the bunker where Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun spent their final hours as Soviet troops fought for control of Berlin in May 1945.

More than fifty years after the fall of Berlin, a state-sponsored competition to create the monument attracted 528 entries, many of which inadvertently highlighted the aesthetic risks of monument design. Sentimentalism, bombast, and incoherence are perhaps especially acute perils in the case of the Holocaust. The competition's guidelines advised participants that they had five acres at their disposal: Most entrants were determined to use them all. The winning design was characterized by gargantuan scale and misguided symbolism. It called for a flat tombstone wider than a football field, whose surface was to be covered by eighteen boulders from Masada, in Israel, where Jews had committed suicide rather than accede to Roman conquest in the first century A.D. (Eighteen is associated with the idea of life, according to Jewish custom.) The plan was swiftly—and, many now think, mercifully—vetoed by Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who feared that it would cast a permanent funerary shadow over the restored capital.

In 1997 the government announced a second competition. This time participation was by invitation only, and the jury was smaller and more expert. Fearing that German history was too sensitive to be left entirely to Germans, the Berlin city government also invited Young to join the five-member panel. Young was the only foreigner—and the only Jew—on the jury, which included the directors of the German Historical Museum in Berlin and of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Bonn, as well as one of Germany's most eminent art historians. "He was the most important person," another juror, the Berlin architect Josef Paul Kleihues, said of Young. Because of his religion, "he had an entirely different legitimacy." Young agrees that his selection as a juror owes something to the fact that "whenever they try to make any kind of decision with a Jewish component, the Germans are paralyzed."

Once deliberations got under way, Young was astounded at the German jurors' lack of faith in their own judgment. "They began by asking me, 'What do you make of this?' They deferred to me more and more," he says. Again his Jewishness played a role. "They didn't know anything from Jewish," he explains. "They had no idea how any of these designs would fit or not fit" as iconography for a memorial to Jewish victims. This became clear early in the process, when several jurors expressed support for the sole figurative entry—a proposal by the Düsseldorf artist Markus Lüpertz for a twelve-foot-high bronze statue of the biblical matriarch Rachel, intended to symbolize "motherhood, mourning, compassion, and hope." Such an image, Young advised his colleagues, violated the biblical ban on representations of the human form. The statue, Young notes, "would be practically illegal for about one third of those murdered to look at. I realized that the issue had never crossed the other jurors' minds. They had no grasp of its significance in the Jewish eye."



1950 DEMOLITION OF BERLIN'S ROYAL PALACE

BRANDENBURG GATE

Sitting in his upstairs study in Amherst, the shelves weighed down with volumes of Jewish history, Young argues that a successful monument would be a perpetual source of unease for Germany. "The more demanding the place is," he says, "the happier I'll be." In his book *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (Yale, 1993), Young questions the symbolic vocabulary of the traditional monument. Too often, he says, monuments end up embalming the past instead of keeping it alive and responsive to contemporary issues. "There is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument," he quotes Robert Musil as writing. "They are no doubt erected to be seen—indeed, to attract attention. But at the same time they are impregnated with something that repels attention." That assertion resonates through much of Young's writings, which question whether memorials actually defeat the purpose for which they were intended. He concludes that "once we assign monumental form to memory, we have to some degree divested ourselves of the obligation to remember."

Is it possible to build monuments that take account of this risk and thus avoid it? In his book, and in many articles and lectures, Young expresses a fascination with so-called countermonuments, like the one created in Hamburg by conceptual artists Jochen and Esther Gerz.

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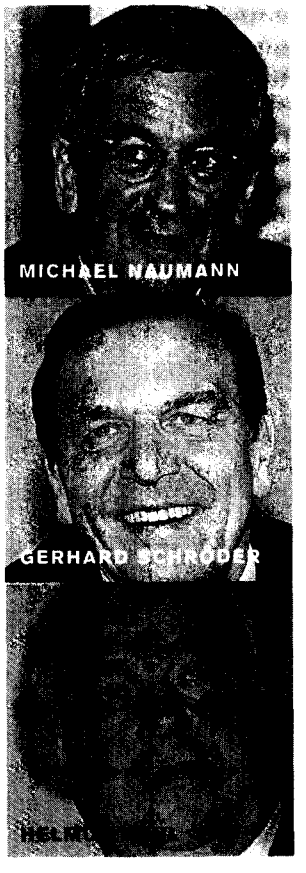
Unveiled in 1986, it consisted of an aluminum pillar coated in a soft veneer of lead and originally towering to more than thirty feet. But over the next decade it began to shrink—as if to symbolize the element of forgetting inherent in the process of remembering. Local citizens were invited to inscribe their names on the pillar, using a steel-tipped stylus hung from its side. Along with decorous signatures, the monument became a magnet for the graffiti of lovers and neo-Nazis alike; a local paper called the inscriptions "a fingerprint of our city applied to the column." As sections of the pillar were covered with markings, it was gradually lowered into an underground chamber. Eventually it disappeared altogether, transferring the burden of memory to those who had seen it.

Young's taste for this kind of monument influenced the nature of the second competition and introduced a decidedly avant-garde element into public discussions of the Berlin monument and its mission. Many of those invited to participate at Young's behest, including the California artist James Turrell and the British sculptor Rachel Whiteread, as well as the deconstructivist architect Peter Eisenman and the abstract sculptor Richard Serra, were suspicious of nineteenth-century monumentality's ongoing relevance and efficacy. This skeptical tendency had found its most prominent exemplar in Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Her simple, brilliant proposal for a black-marble gash set into the ceremonial center of Washington, D.C. unleashed an intense debate among Americans. The controversy led to the eventual inclusion of more conventional representations of soldiers and nurses at the site. Lin's monument, however, has become one of the most visited public places in Washington, and it has provoked extraordinarily emotional responses from the families and comrades of the men and women it commemorates, as well as from visitors with no personal connection to the Vietnam War.



Perhaps because the Holocaust itself was an event of virtually unimaginable extremity, some of the entrants in the second Berlin competition took the idea of the countermonument to extremes. An artistic collaborative from Schiltach, in southern Germany, proposed leaving the site entirely vacant, except for the placement of four large billboards along each of its sides. These would be inscribed with the following text:

> Between 1933 and 1945 more than six million European Jews were murdered. The children and grandchildren of the perpetrators wanted to build a monument here to the victims. This attempt failed. Berlin 1997.

Another proposal would have disrupted the lives of ordinary Germans by turning a short but heavily traveled portion of their beloved Autobahn into a penitential path. One kilometer of the eleven-thousand-kilometer national highway network—a public works project initiated under the Nazis—would have been repaved with large, rough-hewn stones. Germans revel in the absence of speed limits along much of the Autobahn, and the project by Rudolf Herz and Reinhard Matz would have required motorists to slow to a crawl. A large overhead road sign emblazoned MONUMENT TO THE MURDERED JEWS OF EUROPE would announce the entrance. Rest stops at either end would feature educational panels about the Holocaust.

Certainly, the Berlin competition demonstrated that unconventional monuments can take on a monumentality all their own. A proposal by Jochen Gerz, for example, called for creating a vast plaza studded with thirty-nine pillars of stainless steel and illuminated with the word "Why?" in the various languages spoken by the persecuted Jews. As in Hamburg, a writing instrument—this time a computerized stylus—would inscribe stone slabs with the responses to that question written by visitors on podiums. At another corner of the site, in a darkened room in an ear-shaped structure, visitors could contemplate the question while listening to a recording of the "eternal *e*" by the experimental musician La Monte Young.

While James Young and other jurors did not think that such a monument should be built, they were drawn to the equally ambitious countermonument proposed by Eisenman and Serra. Like the massive tombstone vetoed by Chancellor Kohl two years earlier, the Eisenman-Serra plan envisioned making use of the entire site. Its inhuman proportions would thus correspond to the scale of the crime. The Americans wanted to plunge visitors into a forbidding labyrinth: They would place some four thousand concrete pillars on a vast, undulating field and invite visitors to wander among them. The passageways between the pillars were so narrow that even visitors who arrived in groups would be forced to enter alone and to walk through the stark gray maze in solitude. The combination of Eisenman's penchant for dizzyingly intersecting planes and Serra's often brutal gigantism produced a plan for a highly potent and menacing public space. Young called it "the Venus flytrap of Holocaust memorials."

At the same time, Young was drawn to a more modest design, by Berlin architect Gesine Weinmiller, made up of eighteen large stone walls loosely scattered around an open plaza. And while he admired the Eisenman-Serra proposal, Young admits to feeling that there is something to be gained by giving the commission to a German. He notes that Weinmiller is "a young woman of the generation now obligated to shoulder the memory of events for which she is not to blame." The German members of the jury were also taken by Weinmiller's relative youth—she was not yet thirty-five—and the sober dignity of her designs. "Everybody kept referring to her near-Oriental effacement and quietude," Young says. He recalls that the director of the German Historical Museum, Christoph Stoelzl, remarked during the jury's deliberations that Weinmiller "could be our Maya Lin."

IN NOVEMBER 1997, the jury issued a report—written by Young, who also announced its conclusions at

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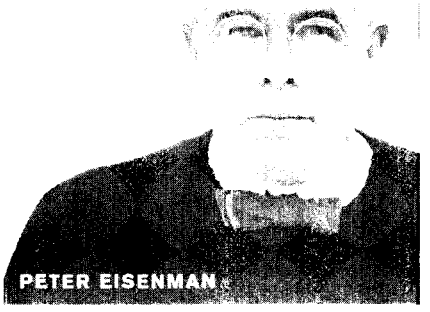
a press conference—endorsing the Eisenman-Serra and the Weinmiller designs. The report was submitted to Kohl, to the city of Berlin, and to the private group that had initiated the project. The chancellor and several other members of the Berlin municipal senate preferred the Eisenman-Serra scheme. But Kohl couldn't accept the plan as it was. Accordingly, he summoned the sculptor and the architect to his Bonn offices and asked them to rework their proposal.

The meeting between the stolid Christian Democrat, the mercurial champion of aggressively disorienting architecture, and the world's most controversial maker of public sculpture lasted two hours. Kohl explained that he was committed to using the official architecture of the new capital to express Germany's enduring responsibility for the mass murder of European Jews. But the premier also wanted to see a number of changes: He wanted the design reduced in size, he wanted landscaping around its edges, and he wanted an area designated for official ceremonies. Not surprisingly, these desires grated on Richard Serra, an uncompromising artist if ever there was one. "Serra was very melancholy and stern," says Stoelzl, who attended the meeting. The sculptor has refused comment, but according to Stoelzl, he told Kohl that he feared a reprise of his bitter dispute with the U.S. government over the 120-foot-long steel sculpture *Tilted Arc*, which had been removed from the plaza fronting the U.S. customs courthouse in Manhattan in 1985, after several years of complaints from the public.

A few days after the Bonn meeting with Kohl, Serra withdrew from the competition. With Serra out of the picture, Eisenman quickly moved to modify the design. For Eisenman, who is equal parts philosopher and showman, the prospect of designing a Holocaust memorial on five acres of the former Third Reich capital must have been irresistible. He dutifully reduced the number of slabs from four thousand to twenty-seven hundred. The height of the tallest slabs was cut from twenty-four feet to around twelve feet. And the narrow passageways leading into the depths of the monument were modified to remove the risk of visitors becoming lost in the labyrinth or falling down and injuring themselves. Surely a monument commemorating the Holocaust needn't claim any victims of its own.



THE ABSTRACT SCULPTOR MET WITH HELMUT KOHL FOR TWO HOURS.

Some German art critics had worried that such changes might diminish the power of the original design, but when Young himself visited Eisenman's Manhattan office to look at the revised model in late June, he was pleased with what he saw. He faxed a note to his fellow jurors in Germany. "I enthusiastically applaud the modified proposal...and fervently recommend it to the chancellor and the memorial commissioners," he wrote. With a more human dimension, the monument still suggested "both the scale of the destruction and the void left behind, as well as the necessarily fraught relationship Germany will always have to the memory of crimes committed in its name." According to Young, the four other jurors continued their custom of deferring to the American member of their panel: "They relied heavily on my take," he says. When Young's evaluation was sent on to the chancellor by the German jurors, not a word was changed.

Of course, the project had its detractors. While many Germans on the jury and in the government came to the conclusion that the best kind of monument was a countermonument, some prominent members of the Jewish community objected that all of the proposals were too abstract and would be incomprehensible to future generations. This was supposed to be "a monument to six million innocent murdered people and I can't find this message in any of the projects," the famed Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal wrote in a Berlin newspaper. And the playwright Arthur Miller, in Germany as a fellow at the newly created American Academy in Berlin, objected that the winning design failed to make any comment on the essence of fascism. "What's the point of piling up stones and creating a cemetery?" Miller asked a German interviewer. "People should learn something. What can a cemetery teach us?"

SUCH complaints were only the beginning. Over the summer, the German election campaign heated up—and Young and Eisenman found themselves in the midst of an escalating political debate. Though the professor and the architect might have thought that intellectuals would rally to their cause, such an assumption would have been wrong. Already, in February 1998, a politically diverse group of nineteen German intellectuals—including the novelist Günter Grass and the publisher of the weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*, Countess Marion Dönhoff—urged Kohl to scuttle the project. For Grass, this was a dramatic about-face. In 1989 he had been a leading supporter of the monument, calling it "an obligation for all Germans." Perhaps the fact that a political conservative like Kohl had adopted the monument as a priority was reason enough for a leftist like Grass to oppose it. But whatever their motives, Grass and other intellectuals argued in an open letter to the government that art was incapable of representing the Holocaust. A monument, they contended, would be an "abstract installation of oppressively gigantic proportions" that would be

COURTESY OF PETER EISENMAN

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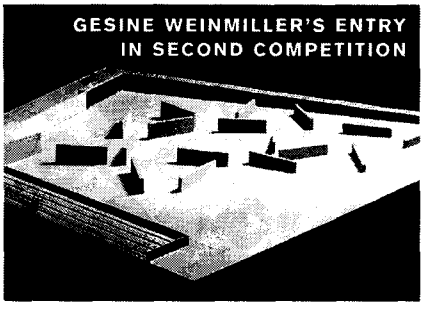
"neither a witness to the past nor a sign to the future." Other critics challenged the concept of a monument devoted exclusively to Jewish victims of the Nazis, insisting that to ignore others, like homosexuals and Gypsies, was to risk adopting the Third Reich's own racist hierarchy.

In July the petitioners found a powerful new ally: the Social Democratic Party, which was running ahead of Kohl in the polls. For years the Social Democrats had been the primary advocates of remembering the Holocaust and attempting to make compensation for its crimes. Few could forget the image of Willy Brandt on his trip to Poland in 1970 kneeling in atonement at the memorial for Jews killed in the Warsaw ghetto. But with just two months remaining before the national elections, the Social Democratic challenger to Kohl—Gerhard Schröder—came out against building the Berlin memorial, after Schröder's own nominee for culture minister, Michael Naumann, argued that the monument would do more to deepen amnesia about the past than deepen understanding of it. Despite the sophistication of his arguments,


GESINE WEINMILLER'S ENTRY IN SECOND COMPETITION

YOUNG'S FAVORITE PROPOSAL CALLED FOR PLUNGING VISITORS INTO A FORBIDDING LABYRINTH THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO WANDER ALONE.

Naumann's stand raised fears that the Social Democrats were pandering to voters eager to see a confident new Germany freed of the burdens of its recent past.

Naumann, a former journalist who had just returned from a stint in New York publishing as president of Henry Holt and Company, brought the memorial question into the center of German politics. Articulating ideas not dissimilar to those put forth earlier by James Young, he accused Kohl of displaying a "crude understanding of historical memory, which thinks that things can be finished by a modeled memory, and then you move on in history." As an alternative, Naumann suggested that Germany take the $10 million it would cost to build the monument and put it toward preserving the deteriorating remains of concentration camps.

Even as he derided the Holocaust memorial, Naumann advocated a plan to rebuild the grandiose royal palace that once stood at the center of Berlin. The war-damaged former residence of the Hohenzollern dynasty was destroyed by the communists in 1950, but since the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, there

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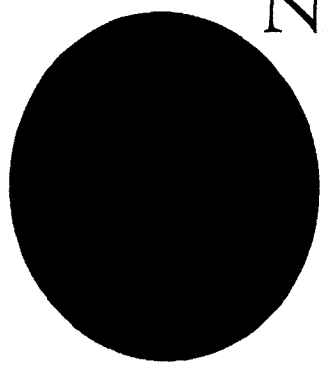

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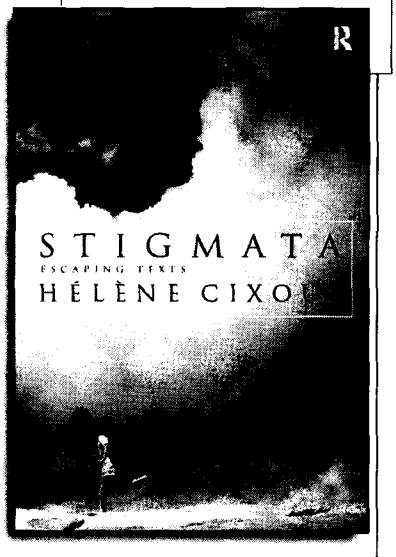

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have been nostalgic calls for its reconstruction. Critics noted if Naumann had been a conservative, he would have been accused of suppressing the unpleasant truths of the Nazi era in favor of a nostalgic return to the imperial past.

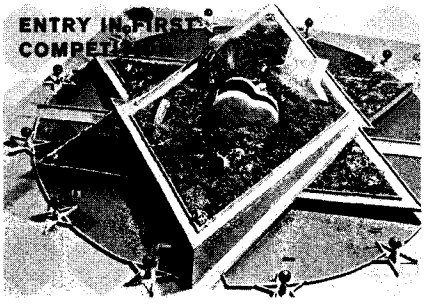
Meanwhile, Kohl himself was facing complaints about the memorial from within his own Christian Democratic Union, most notably from Berlin mayor Eberhard Diepgen, who proclaimed that he did not want Berlin transformed into a "capital of remorse." On August 24, Kohl agreed to Diepgen's request to put any action on the memorial question on hold until after the election, saying it would be "irresponsible" to let the Social Democrats turn it into a campaign issue. But after the American Jewish Committee criticized the delay, warning that it constituted "a seriously negative message about the new Germany," Kohl stressed he was by no means advocating that the project be canceled.

A few weeks before his career-ending defeat on September 27, Kohl restated his strong support for the project. The memorial "involves the core of our national self-understanding," he told the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. "There is a high degree of agreement within the parliament, the government, and the public that Germany has a special responsibility to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive. Therefore it is necessary that near the places that Nazi crimes were perpetrated and where they are documented a central place be created to commemorate the murdered Jews of Europe."

At the same time, he made clear that his support for the monument was motivated not only by a sense of historical duty. "Many have not yet realized how closely our debates are followed around the world, and not only within Jewish communities," he said about the monument dispute. "We would be condemned around the world if we were to say, 'Because it's so difficult, it would be best to drop it.'"

WHETHER the victorious Social Democrats will be willing to risk such condemnation remains to be seen. Several Berlin municipal representatives of Schröder's Social Democratic Party have spoken out in favor of building a national memorial, as has Joshka Fischer, leader of the Green Party and the designated foreign minister in Schröder's government. The agreement signed on October 20 between the Social Democrats and the Greens outlining the terms of their governing coalition states that the question will be referred to the Federal Parliament, the Bundestag. Aesthetic judgments are not a parliamentary specialty, although the Bundestag did devote considerable attention to the 1995 wrapping of the Reichstag by Christo, voting narrowly in 1994 to approve that project.

Young, for all his openly expressed ambivalence, remains a strong advocate of the project. He concedes that this represents a change in his thinking on the effectiveness of monuments. "Either I've evolved," he muses, "or I've been co-opted altogether. If they were paying me



MARGA AND WALTER PRANKL, HERIBERT HEERE

SENTIMENTALISM, BOMBAST, AND INCOHERENCE ARE PERHAPS ESPECIALLY ACUTE PERILS FOR HOLOCAUST MONUMENTS.

$50,000 to do this, then you could say I've sold out, but I'm getting 6,000 D-marks," or about $3,500, plus travel expenses. "It's not very much."

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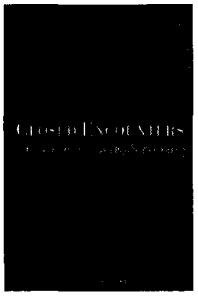

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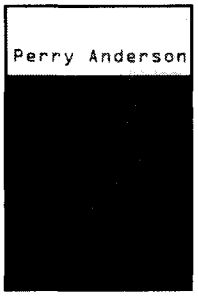

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Politics and Philosophy

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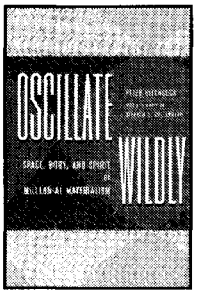

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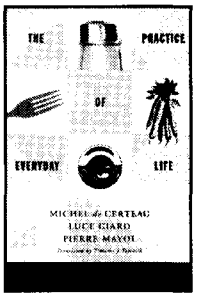

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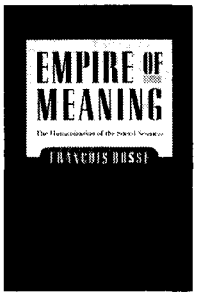

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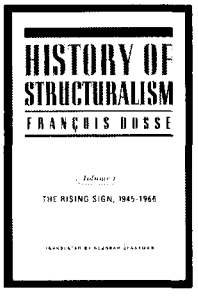

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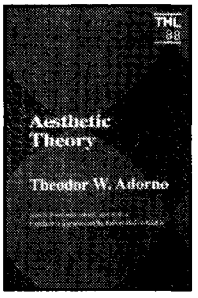

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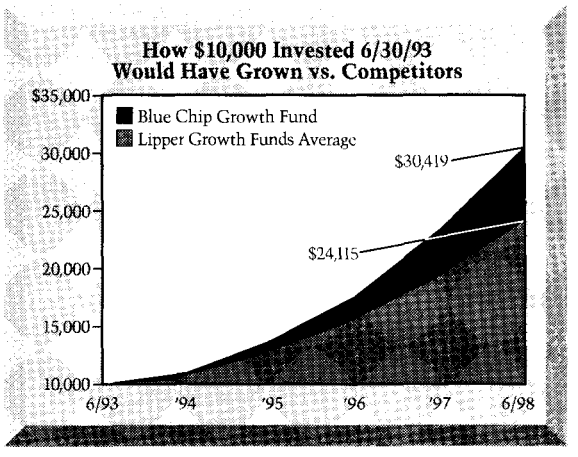

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Still, Young's evolution is far from complete. He says he initially agreed to serve on the jury because he "wanted to force myself to get off the fence. Did I want there to be a public and central acknowledgment of what happened the last time Germany was governed from Berlin? On balance I'd say that 51 percent of me says, 'Yes, there must be that,' and 49 percent remains completely skeptical—wondering if the monument is being made for all the wrong reasons as a way for the government to put this behind Germany so that they can move on into the twenty-first century unencumbered. To my mind, the monument functions just as much to put the memory out of mind as it does to embody it. And I still believe that." But he adds: "When the time came to put my money where my mouth is, I came down on the side of trying to make something that would formalize the extreme difficulty and perhaps even the impossibility of a memorial."

Will Eisenman's project allow Young to have it both ways? What he has proposed seems to fall short of being a counter-monument like Jochen and Esther Gerz's literally self-effacing Hamburg column. Indeed, its enduring and mammoth form could well become an iconic landmark of a proud, confident twenty-first-century Berlin. Still, it does abjure any didactic function or imagery. "This will always represent a cut in the fabric of the city that will remain unexplainable," Eisenman says. "What I wanted to do is to say that the ground in Berlin is no longer stable, sacred. In other words, it's the plane that no man occupies without some trepidation."

Peter Eisenman naturally hopes his design will be realized, but, he adds, it will exist in the imagination regardless of what happens: "Whether they build it or not, it's still there and it's recorded." And Young will relish a lively parliamentary debate, having earlier argued that discussion itself may be an effective antidote to forgetting. As he bluntly counseled the Germans when he began advising them on their quandary, "Better a thousand years of Holocaust memorial competitions in Germany than any single 'final solution' to Germany's memorial problem."

Michael Z. Wise is the author of *Capital Dilemma: Germany's Search for a New Architecture of Democracy* (Princeton Architectural Press, 1998).

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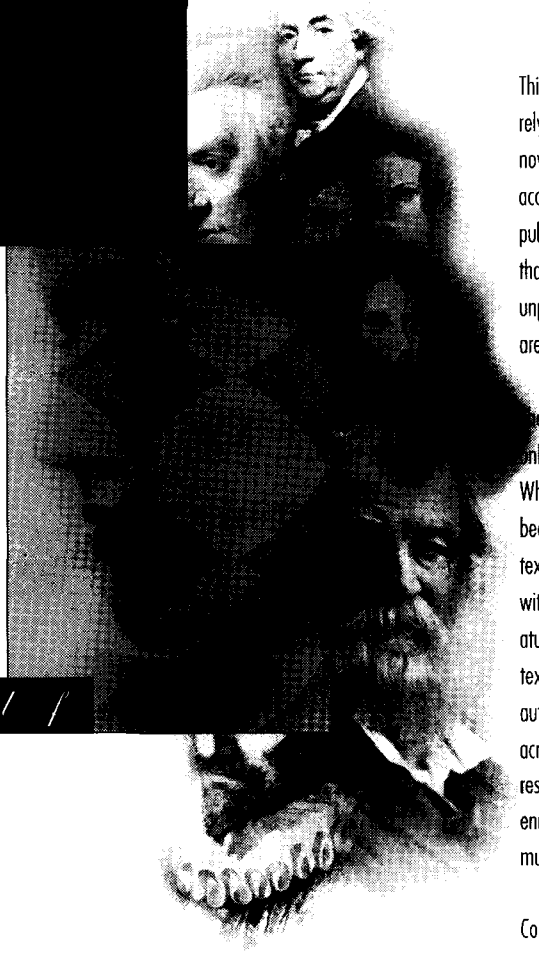

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THE VISIONARY COMPANY

IN 1975 A SIXTY-SEVEN-YEAR-OLD FARMER named Emery Blagdon entered a pharmacy in North Platte, Nebraska, looking to purchase some "elements." After refining the request to "earth elements," Blagdon invited the pharmacy's manager, Dan Dryden, back to his farm on the Garfield Table, a fertile break in Nebraska's desolate Sand Hills, to inspect the "machines" that the charcoal, sulfur, and mineral salts were intended to fuel. There, inside a weathered eight-hundred-square-foot shed, Dryden saw something akin to an explosion in a Christmas tree factory—a tangle of light and reflection that on closer inspection resolved itself into hundreds of hanging and freestanding sculptures made of wood, intricately twisted steel and copper wire, tinfoil, ribbons, Popsicle sticks, coffee-can lids, and other detritus, all strung with strands of tiny lights.

The ensemble, however, was no mere decoration. Blagdon, an eighth-grade dropout and former hobo who had seen both of his parents and three of his six siblings die of cancer, believed that when his machines were put in different configurations, their combined static charges created auras capable of curing anything. "A scientist could explain this," Blagdon told Dryden. "I just know that it works."

Dryden began joining the locals and occasional out-of-towners who visited the shed to treat their arthritis or just to hang out. "Emery had a duality in him," he says. "He was well aware that the designs were—to use a higher-sounding term than he would've—aesthetically pleasing. He knew they were pretty. But there was also the fact that they would help whatever ailments people had." Though Dryden made some vague motions toward buying something, Blagdon clearly wasn't making "art" for sale.

But after Blagdon's death in 1986, art is what his healing machines became. Last spring, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, they were displayed under the same roof as paintings by Van Gogh, Monet, and Eakins, as well as Marcel Duchamp's famous "readymades." As part of *Self-Taught Artists of the Twentieth Century: An American Anthology*, a traveling exhibit of some three hundred works by thirty-two artists gathered under the aegis of the Museum of American Folk Art in New York City, he took a prominent place in the first major national retrospective of a bewilderingly rich and diverse field.

The show contains works by such long-established stars of the folk art firmament as the naive painters Grandma Moses and Horace Pippin and the carvers William Edmondson and Edgar Tolson, artists who worked within a community of like-minded folk, often using skills learned on the job or at the knee of an elder. But Blagdon's machines were perhaps more at home alongside the work of some of the more recently canonized masters in the burgeoning field known as "outsider art," individuals with deeply eccentric, inward-looking visions, each of whom constitutes what the critic and Columbia philosopher Arthur Danto has called "an art world unto himself."

There, on the museum's pristine white walls, were the frenetically lined drawings of the Mexican-American schizophrenic Martin Ramirez, who in a California asylum drew undulating cityscapes on scraps of paper cobbled into scrolls with saliva and potato starch. There were the delicately violent, brilliantly colored tableaux of Henry Darger, the reclusive Chicago janitor who documented the struggles of the seven angelic, clonelike Vivian Girls (sometimes drawn with horns and penises) against insectlike monsters called Glandelinians. There were the fantastic architectural drawings of A.R. Rizzoli, many of them allegorical representations of his dead mother mailed to her as posthumous birthday cards. And there were the myriad creations of the self-described Milwaukee freelance artist, innovator, and philosopher Eugene von Bruenchenhein, conceived as an elaborate tribute to his wife, Marie: cheesecake photos of her in little more than pearls and feathered headdresses; ceramic masks; paintings; and—most spectacularly—perversely monumental miniature thrones made of chicken bones salvaged from TV dinners, lined up in a case with tiny paintbrushes made from strands of Marie's hair.

The names of these artists—and the haunting, fascinating images of their art—have become increasingly familiar in recent years. SoHo's Puck Building has hosted an annual Outsider Art Fair since 1993, attracting throngs of dealers, collectors, and curiosity seekers. A Henry Darger traveling retrospective broke attendance records at the Museum of American Folk Art in 1997 and garnered rapturous praise from Danto, *Time*'s Robert Hughes, and others. The American Visionary Art Museum, which opened in Baltimore in 1995, has been designated by Congress the official national depository of self-taught art, and mounts large group shows on themes such as love and the apocalypse. Even with all these antecedents, the current traveling exhibition may make the strongest claim yet that this material,

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CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL, OUTSIDER ART IS MAKING ITS MARK.

BY **JENNIFER SCHUESSLER**

EDGAR TOLSON, WOMAN IN VEST, CIRCA 1970

whatever it's called, should be regarded not as product, not as pathology, not as therapy, but as Art.

No one who has seen the works in question could deny that many of them are both technically accomplished and aesthetically powerful. Indeed, one of the curators of *Self-Taught Artists of the Twentieth Century* declares that the artists in the exhibition were "selected because their work was rich in those qualities that characterize any serious work of art." For all that, even the advocates of outsider art frequently quarrel over the terms of its institutionalization. Curators and collectors may be attempting to expand our notions of what art is, but questions about a body of work that has long defined itself in terms of what it is not seem as unresolved as ever. Does outsider art deserve the attention of art-world mandarins, or does it advance a populist aesthetic that renders them irrelevant? Are the advocates of this art really doing a favor for these artists—or are they exploiting for their own benefit the cachet the art world readily attaches to marginality and otherness? Can works produced in the service of exceptionally bizarre personal visions and private obsessions be seen properly in art museums, or is our appreciation of them impoverished when they are cleaned up and brought inside? Such questions are being raised not by defenders of elite aesthetic tradition, the favorite bogeymen of many writers on outsider art, but by critics and collectors who count themselves among the outsider artists' most passionate allies.

FOLK art, or self-taught art, or naive art, or outsider art, or whatever not entirely satisfactory label is fretfully attached to this work, has traveled a long road to respectability. By most accounts, the first people to collect folk art in America were the artists—among them Marsden Hartley, Robert Laurent, and William Zorach—who gathered around Ogunquit, Maine, in the 1920s, decorating their summer cottages with naive paintings, hooked rugs, decoys, and other artifacts bought from locals. For many of folk art's early proponents, what mattered about these generally anonymous works were their stripped-down formal qualities, which were invoked as a homegrown basis for modernism.

But the idea that folk art could be a twentieth-century phenomenon, and that individual folk artists deserved recognition, dates primarily to a second wave of collecting, in the late 1960s and 1970s—a period in which, by one estimate, two hundred new self-taught artists were "discovered." In those days, collections—most notably that of Herbert Waide Hemphill, Jr., which crossed and recrossed the country on semipermanent tour from 1973 to 1988—were dominated by nineteenth-century utilitarian craft objects and twentieth-century Americana, often presented in cluttered installations with sparse documentation. But gradually, exhibitions began to be organized according to principles more commonly applied to fine art, with an emphasis on individual authorship and a shift toward objects that could be classified as either painting or sculpture, rather than as objects intended for everyday use.

One of the first shows organized along these lines was a 1981 exhibit (curated by Elsa Longhauser, who, along with Harold Szeeman is responsible for *Self-Taught*

COURTESY OF FLEISHER/OLLMAN GALLERY, PRIVATE COLLECTION

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Artists of the Twentieth Century) called *Transmitters: The Isolate Artist in America*. That exhibit, with its heavy emphasis on the ideas of the British art historian Roger Cardinal, was something of an eruption of European ideas into the American folk-art pastoral. In his influential 1972 book, *Outsider Art*, Cardinal attempted to sketch out a description of an alternative art derived from Jean Dubuffet's highly polemical writings on the art of European mental patients, an art supposedly directly in touch with the primal wellsprings of creativity and unencumbered by a self-conscious need either to imitate or to rebel against the art of the past.

The outsiders and the folk artists have coexisted uneasily ever since. The recent attempt to comprehend both under the rubric "self-taught" doesn't so much solve the problem of definition as accept its insolubility. The artists in Longhauser's current traveling show are presumed to be bound together by "trust in their own ingenuity, inventiveness, and imagination, and convictions." It seems as though wildly divergent artists have somehow been assembled in harmonious fellowship under the default label "self-taught"—if not exactly a Family of Man, then a peaceable reunion of oddball whittler uncles, street-preaching great aunts, and a few mildly embarrassing cousins standing off to the side by themselves, muttering about UFOs, the government, and the coming apocalypse.

Certainly, the work in the traveling exhibit covers a wide range of styles and temperaments. The African-American assemblage artist Lonnie Holley, whose ever expanding yard environment in Birmingham, Alabama, is currently threatened with condemnation by the local airport authority, is represented by elegant hanging wire sculptures and by pieces made from salvaged materials, whose titles evoke themes of individual dignity and community preservation that should go down easy with liberal museum goers. *Thinking About My Labor* consists of a rotting beam shoved in a rusted camp toilet. As Holley, who has issued far more statements about his art than most outsiders, puts it on the wall label for this piece: "Our earth is the biggest community of them all."

The work of the late sign-maker Jesse Howard, however, expresses less gentle sentiments. Up until his death in 1983, Howard plastered his house and yard, known as "Sorehead Hill," outside Fulton, Missouri, with signs denouncing the sins of everyone from the government to his neighbors (who sometimes responded with vandalism) and proclaiming the coming of the Lord's vengeance in black block letters with red punctuation. JOHN KENNEDY, one sign announces, I WOULD GIRK THAT BIG FAT TEAT OUT OF YOUR MOUTH.

In a way, Howard's cantankerous signs befit the show's strikingly beautiful but noisy catalog. While it contains some thoughtful meditations on what separates and unites self-taught and mainstream artists, there are also occasional outbursts against highbrow critics who "steadfastly maintain the manufactured, manipulated chasm between the 'rough-hewn,' folk art universe and the fine art world of more 'refined' sensibilities." In the short essays about individual artists (only half of which are by art historians or curators), comments about "the hegemony of the technological," "the hypocrisy of American Puritanism," and "the materialist banality of middle-class existence" crop up at regular intervals between more sober efforts to place self-taught work in some intelligible social and art-historical context.

"It's an incredible document, isn't it?" says Michael Hall, former head of the sculpture department at the Cranbrook Academy of Art and long a prominent player in the field, who in addition to contributing three essays to the catalog served as a consultant to the show early on. "It's quite a cast of characters, with all these wild advocacies. It has absolutely no point of view. It's like a collage."

But Hall's own point of view on the display of outsider art can be difficult to figure out. On one hand, he argues in his catalog essay on Jesse Howard that the signs "gain power as they disassemble from" their original placement around Sorehead Hill and reassemble on gallery walls, where they become "less a harangue and more the raw self-affirmation that haunts so much of the best art of the modern era." And yet Hall is downright scathing in his assessment of the Blagdon shed. "Oh, I'm supposed to think the healing machines are wonderful, but I was kind of underwhelmed," he says. "Their highest use had everything to do with Emery Blagdon and the neighbors who came to be healed. It's very fragmented in its present form. In some totally wrong-headed system of thinking, they took it out of a barn and set it into the world in a barnlike rendition of a white pedestal in a white room. It became kind of like a joke, a farce. They took it out of context, and then they put it back into an entirely new context." Hall says a lot of the work in the show suffers from the same treatment. "The context has been expunged, and that's a problem."

Hall is referring to the fact that, in Philadelphia, Blagdon's shed had been reconstructed as a piece of installation art: a mock-up of rough wood siding whitewashed on the outside and left natural within, complete with a scattering of fra-

HENRY DARGER, MT LAVA FLOW, CIRCA 1950–70

COURTESY OF FLEISHER/OLLMAN GALLERY, PRIVATE COLLECTION (2X)

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HENRY DARGER, 1970

grant dirt and recorded cricket sounds—a self-conscious representation of someone's idea of the Nebraska prairie. Other critics share Hall's unease with the Blagdon display. *ArtForum International* did call the healing machines "perhaps the most impressive item" in a show filled with "wonderful work." But Tom Csaszar, writing in the *New Art Examiner*, a Chicago-based magazine that often covers the self-taught field, was concerned that all of this simulation gave the viewer a distorted view of Blagdon's accomplishment. He said viewing the reconstructed shed was less like visiting Cézanne's or Eakins's studio than "like hearing a Gregorian chant or a Bob Dylan song played by a full orchestra, in an imaginary culture in which this would be the only possible type of musical experience." The treatment of the healing machines was, he suggested, something of an emblem for a show that both blurred and illuminated the boundaries between art and something unnervingly, not quite describably other.

IN A BOOK published this year called *The Temptation: Edgar Tolson and the Genesis of Twentieth Century Folk Art* (North Carolina), sociologist Julia Ardery also looks at the problems that occur when such boundaries are crossed. She explores how, by taking folk and outsider material into galleries and museums—places its creators would be unlikely to go themselves—collectors and curators have distorted its meanings and short-changed its makers.

But what for Csaszar and Hall is largely an aesthetic conundrum is for Ardery fundamentally a political betrayal. Written as a dissertation at the University of Kentucky, *The Temptation* is a detailed, sharp-elbowed analysis of how academic artists-turned-collectors helped, from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, to create the commercial and critical context in which contemporary American folk art and its "Caliban-like cousin," outsider art, could be perceived. These well-intentioned interlopers, Ardery contends, wound up slighting the real political interests of the artists and their communities. More than just a morality tale of greedy collectors and helpless artists, her book tells the story of a generation of antipoverty workers and other educated young people who descended on Appalachia in the late 1960s and later sold out their political principles. For some of them, folk art came to represent what Ardery calls "the margin of escape" from guilt-ridden bourgeois comfort that "affluent Americans hope to and have maintained." Moving the art into more comfortable surroundings soon came to seem easier than improving the living conditions of its creators.

As folk art gained respectability simply as art, Ardery writes, the poverty and deprivation of its makers came to be seen not as problems to be solved but credentials to be admired. Folk artists were charged with being "exemplary sufferers," with "keeping the faith" of simple living and pure expression that trained artists, in an increasingly complex, institutionalized art world, were no longer willing or able to uphold. By not caring so much—or being presumed not to care so much—about their "careers," Ardery argues, folk artists preserved the dubious ideal of "disinterestedness" she sees at the rotten heart of Western aesthetics, even as the market boomed and collectors prospered. Folk art became an emblem of lost innocence—and a refuge from an art world overrun by abstraction, careerism, and theory. By taking up its cause, academically trained

EVEN THE ADVOCATES OF OUTSIDER ART QUARREL OVER THE TERMS OF ITS LEGITIMACY.

CARL HAMMER GALLERY/DAVID BERGLAND

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but unknown artists might mount a "challenge without consequences" against the establishment, "undertaken vicariously through the figure of the folk artist."

Most prominent among Ardery's artists-turned-collectors was Michael Hall, who as a young sculpture professor at the University of Kentucky in the late 1960s befriended and became the primary champion of the carver Edgar Tolson, soon to emerge as one of the first stars of contemporary folk art. Hall first met Tolson in 1968, when his then wife, Julie, the daughter of Nashville art collectors, discovered one of Tolson's poplar-wood "dolls" at a local guild fair. The carvings were being sold anonymously, but the Halls tracked down the artist at his homestead in Compton, Kentucky, and soon became friendly with the large Tolson family.

One of the more explosive charges in the book is that regional academic artists like Hall used the discourse of marginality and outsiderness not just to promote folk and outsider artists but to assert the value of their own marginality to the New York-based art-world establishment. In a reenactment of a "ritual of modernism" that goes back at least as far as Picasso and the African masks in a Paris museum, Ardery writes, there was a self-serving identification—almost a transfer of authenticity—going on. She quotes Hall's bombastic remarks at a lecture on Martin Ramirez at Philadelphia's Moore College of Art in 1985: "As an artist, I am asking the court of critical revision to parole my brother Martin now."

Not only did the Halls become Tolson's primary collectors and sometimes sales agents, but Michael Hall, as a critic and curator, became the main exponent of his work. In some cases, Ardery argues, Hall took his efforts to establish Tolson as more than a craftsman so far that he may even have become a dubious kind of collaborator. It was Hall, she suggests, who promoted the idea that *The Fall of Man,* a series of biblical allegories produced over a number of years and first displayed together in 1976, was in fact a single work. As Hall told Ardery, showing the pieces as one work "was key to the building of his reputation because it was that piece that would force his critics to back off and start to deal with him as an innovative artist...not a mere craftsman repeating himself endlessly."

BLAGDON HEALING MACHINE

COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF AMERICAN FOLK ART/NOREEN ALLES. JON BLUMB

According to Ardery, Hall also chose topical and provocative titles for Tolson's work. It was Hall, she says, who in a 1986 exhibition catalog titled a piece that was carved circa 1976 and showed the beheading of John the Baptist in Herod's palace *Abuse of Power (Watergate).*

Though Hall's brief essay on Tolson in the *Self-Taught Artists of the Twentieth Century* catalog echoes some of Ardery's more general points, he is, unsurprisingly, not much impressed by the political thrust of her book. "She had an agenda," he says, "which was finding out that the world is a mean place, full of people who ratchet themselves up via unfortunate and helpless people. She derides the 1960s populism that fired the 'discovery' of folk artists, to use a term she disapproves of. In fact, given the Sixties as I lived them—and as Julia Ardery didn't!—these revelations were important. As corny as it sounds, folk art was proof-positive that there was a certain goodness to life, given a lot of the ugliness of the times. She says we were jaded, but it's Julia Ardery and her generation who are jaded."

As for the question of who has been using whom, Hall (who sold 270 pieces from his collection to the Milwaukee Art Museum in 1989 for $2.3 million) simply turns the charge of predatory collecting, somewhat improbably, back on Ardery herself. "Now she's on a successful lecture tour, using slides and supporting material gathered from me and others, receiving royalties, getting a Ph.D. So who has really profited the most off of Edgar Tolson?" he asks, his voice rising.

"Sorry to sound a bit cranky. But you can print that!"

ARDERY'S argument, however, is echoed by others. Whereas she emphasizes the political dangers of ignoring—or glamorizing—outsider artists' miserable working conditions, art historian Kenneth Ames emphasizes the moral hazards that can accompany the elevation of misery and madness into art. Back in 1977, as an adjunct professor of art history at the University of Delaware, Ames issued a blistering wake-up call to the cozy world of folk-art collectors. In a talk that set off what became known as "the shoot-out at Winterthur," Ames challenged his audience—including Hall—to consider the

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possibility that folk art itself didn't really exist and was perhaps most interesting for what it revealed about those who created and promoted the category.

More recently, in an essay in *The Artist Outsider,* a 1994 anthology put together by Hall and the folklorist Eugene Metcalf, Ames extended his folk-art-based critique to the newer, more fashionable realm of outsider art. Outsider art, Ames argued, is "a flawed and injurious concept that promotes and perpetuates a dehumanizing conception of art." While the essay is explicitly an attack on the "outsider" half of the term, in fact he seems to be objecting to the idea of art itself. "When we use the word 'art' to describe the efforts of mental patients and isolates," he argues, "we immediately rob this complex inner exploration of its deeper personal meanings."

In 1998, Ames—now chair of academic programs at the Bard Graduate Center for the Study of Decorative Arts—confesses he has stopped following the debates and views his status as a lightning rod with almost detached amusement. In fact, he talks with greater excitement about his current study of Christmas cards from the nineteenth century to the present, a subject he literally stumbled upon when he found a box of circa-1910 specimens in a garbage can in Schenectady, New York. Ames calls these cards a "real popular art form," though he insists—in sharp contrast to those demanding that outsiders be let into fine-art museums—he'd rather call his finds material culture than art.

ACCORDING TO ARDERY, FOLK ART BECAME AN EMBLEM OF LOST INNOCENCE—AND A REFUGE FROM AN ART WORLD OVERRUN BY ABSTRACTION, CAREERISM, AND THEORY.

If Ames seems to have lost some enthusiasm for the old debates, he still cheerfully expresses opinions you're unlikely to hear from anyone else anywhere near the field. He calls Henry Darger "interesting" but says he found the subtext of sexual abuse in the 1997 solo show "sinister." In Ames's view, it's not the art that deserves institutionalization: It may be the artists themselves. Darger, he says, was a deeply troubled individual. "But they tended to go light on that, to emphasize his sense of pattern and color. What disturbs me in general is the impulse to lionize the potentially pathological. The world is full of pictures, and more are being painted every day. We don't have

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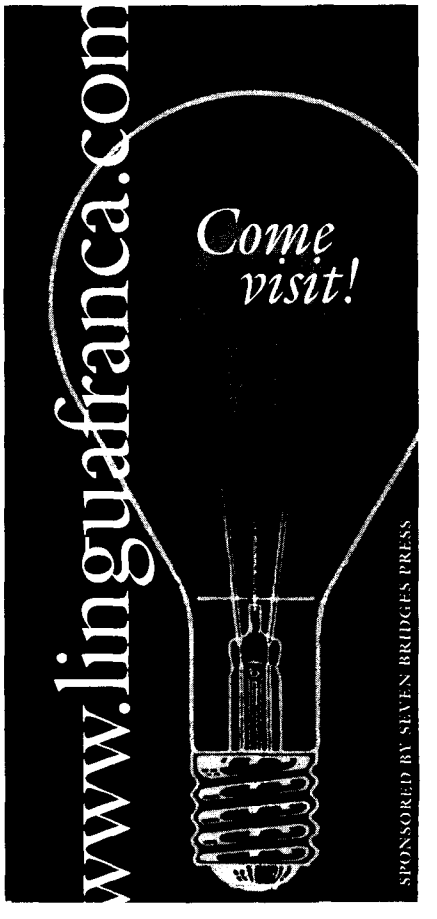

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EDGAR TOLSON, 1974

"THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS AN OUTSIDE OR INSIDE ARTIST," SAYS FINSTER. "JUST LIKE THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS AN OUTSIDE OR INSIDE MECHANIC, OR AN OUTSIDE OR INSIDE GOVERNOR."

REVEREND HOWARD FINSTER, 1998

to throw our values down the drain just to clutch at a bunch of pictures! And if they're chosen because they're by weird people, why not examine what's weird about them?"

PERHAPS no figure more perfectly embodies what's weird about the world of outsider art than the Reverend Howard Finster. The problems of authenticity, appropriation, and context that so exercise critics like Ames, Ardery, and Hall become almost transcendently complicated—or else entirely moot—in Finster's presence. A Baptist preacher and former bicycle repairman, this self-described "stranger from another world" has traded quips with Johnny Carson on *The Tonight Show*, painted record covers for R.E.M. and Talking Heads, and signed and numbered some forty-five thousand items, many of them copies of his giant Coke bottles, Jesuses, and other popular works dashed off with the help of his family. With his toll-free sales number and long CV of gallery and museum shows, he is one of the best-known and most criticized artists in the field, a frequent target of snickering comments about outsiders who come inside with a vengeance.

Not that Finster himself has much use for labels. "There's no such thing as an outside or inside artist," he has said. "Just like there's no such thing as an outside or inside mechanic, or an outside or inside governor."

Finster has his defenders in the art world. Lynda Roscoe Hartigan, deputy curator of the National Museum of American Art, compares him to Robert Rauschenberg, another tireless and often repetitive producer. "Mr. Finster has never given up a shred of his independence. He knows just what he's doing in terms of getting his message out. After all, plenty of trained craftsmen turn out one too many of the same thing in response to the market. Sometimes the work suffers as a result. But sometimes it helps them to turn a corner." Kenneth Ames puts it a little bit less charitably: "Now, Finster is a very crafty character! He's made a lot of money in the bumpkin business, the religious crackpot business. But it's unfair to criticize him for being worldly and not playing the role they assigned him."

When *Self-Taught Artists of the Twentieth Century* visited Atlanta's High

GUY MENDEZ (ABOVE); JENNIFER SCHUESSLER (BELOW)

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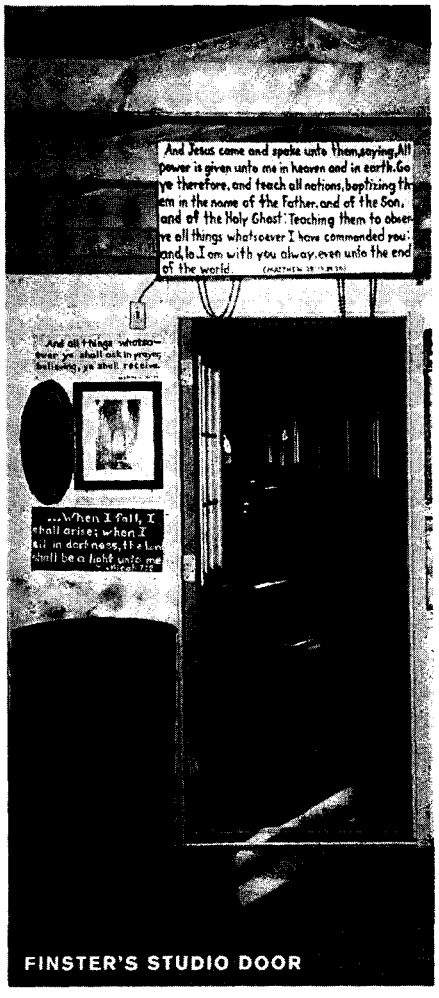
HOWARD FINSTER, IRLITA IS WEARING CLOTHS, 1982


And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

FINSTER'S STUDIO DOOR

Museum this fall, Finster was represented by a half-dozen paintings and sculptures from the late 1970s and early 1980s, before he became a celebrity and a tourist attraction. In another part of the museum, visitors could see some of the hundred-odd works from Finster's Paradise Gardens that the High recently bought. This purchase represents the first acquisition by a major art museum of an outdoor visionary environment, presented, down to its glass-studded concrete walkways, in the burnished faux-contextual style Hall so deplores.

Meanwhile, a trip to Finster's real context turns up strangely little of his art. Located in an ordinary 1950s residential neighborhood of Pennsville, Georgia, a hundred miles outside of Atlanta, Paradise Gardens is a leafy enclosure of weather-beaten buildings, junk sculptures, and rusting bicycle ziggurats sprawling across four acres of drained swamp. Though Finster himself abandoned the pulpit in 1976 to devote himself to his "sermons in paint," he still appears at Paradise Gardens every Sunday to preach the Gospel.

On one recent Sunday, Finster holds forth from an armchair in a corner of the cluttered gift shop dressed in a black suit, black fedora, and colorful Finster tie, his banjo idling at his side. "Now, you go and tell them that Howard Finster is a genuine old-fashioned folk artist," he tells a group of blond children who kneel squirming at his feet, while their father's video camera rolls. Then he talks about sin and salvation and the "seven invisible parts of the soul," all with a strange detachment, as though he's appraising the small crowd from three feet behind his eyes. "Now, there are some whose works will be saved but whose spirit will pass away," he muses, "and some whose spirit will be saved but whose works will pass away."

Whether Finster's own work will pass away is another question. Most of the structures in Paradise Gardens—a small mirror-shingled cabin on stilts, a collapsing shed with records of Finster's media appearances painted on the cracked windows—are closed to the public pending restoration. But there are few signs that any preservation work is under way. The three-story hexagonal tower sags like a birthday cake left out in the rain. Everywhere paintings and inscriptions are washing away.

COURTESY OF FLEISHER/OLLMAN GALLERY, PRIVATE COLLECTION (ABOVE); JENNIFER SCHUESSLER (BELOW)

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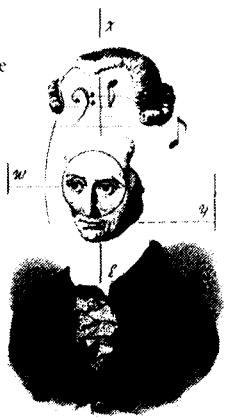

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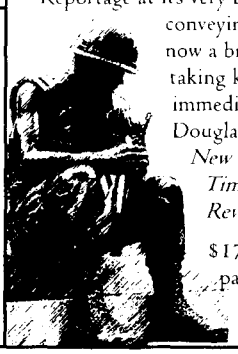

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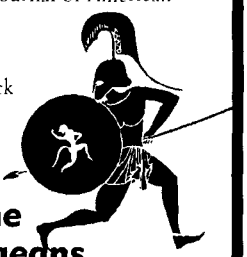

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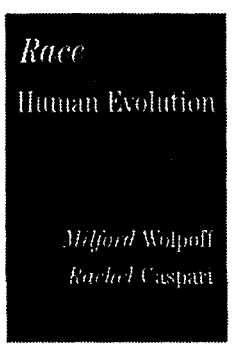

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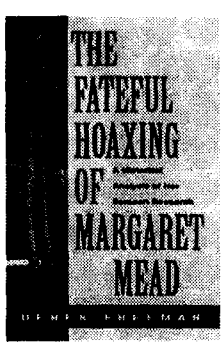

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Outside of the gift shop, there are strikingly few discrete Finster works in evidence. A lot seems to be attributed to someone else, whether it's a memorial to Keith Haring or a bicycle-wheel weathervane labeled "Made by Mr. Milley of Gainesville, donated by Warren and Sylvia Lowe." Inside one rickety structure, someone has put up a page from *Journeys*, the in-house magazine of Coca-Cola, Inc., picturing Finster's famous Coke bottle. "Coca-Cola prospers today because of the vision of its early leaders," the copy reads. "It is also benefiting quite nicely from the visions of the Reverend Howard Finster, an enthusiastic Coca-Cola promoter and America's leading folk artist."

At Paradise Gardens, the ironies almost seem to hang too heavily on the vine. But Finster pays them as little mind as the flashbulbs that go off a few feet from his face all afternoon. He shows visitors a diagram he drew after receiving a vision concerning the relationship between electricity and the seven invisible parts of the soul. "Now I don't think you have any excuse not to learn that parable. This didn't come to anybody in a university, it didn't come to a professor, it didn't come to Shakespeare. It came to Howard Finster!" He breaks off to mention "a fifteen thousand dollar painting showing another world" that he recently completed for MTV. Not that he thinks MTV likes God. "In fact, sometimes I think these big stations are trying to drive Him plumb off the air!"

As he gets up to leave, he ignores a question about the fate of the Gardens to say that we don't need a pope or preachers of any kind or even Howard Finster: "You just need to read the Word of God!" It's clear he's bent on getting out his own version of it, by whatever compromised, impermanent, commercial, bewildering, accidental, or beautiful means come to hand. Like Emery Blagdon, Edgar Tolson, or Lonnie Holley, Howard Finster remains uncomfortably—or perhaps comfortably—beyond the art world's labels. The critics and curators can say what they will, but sometimes the folk artist—like the Almighty—has his own purposes.

Jennifer Schuessler is an assistant editor of *The New York Review of Books*. Her work has appeared in the *Voice Literary Supplement*, *In These Times*, and other publications.

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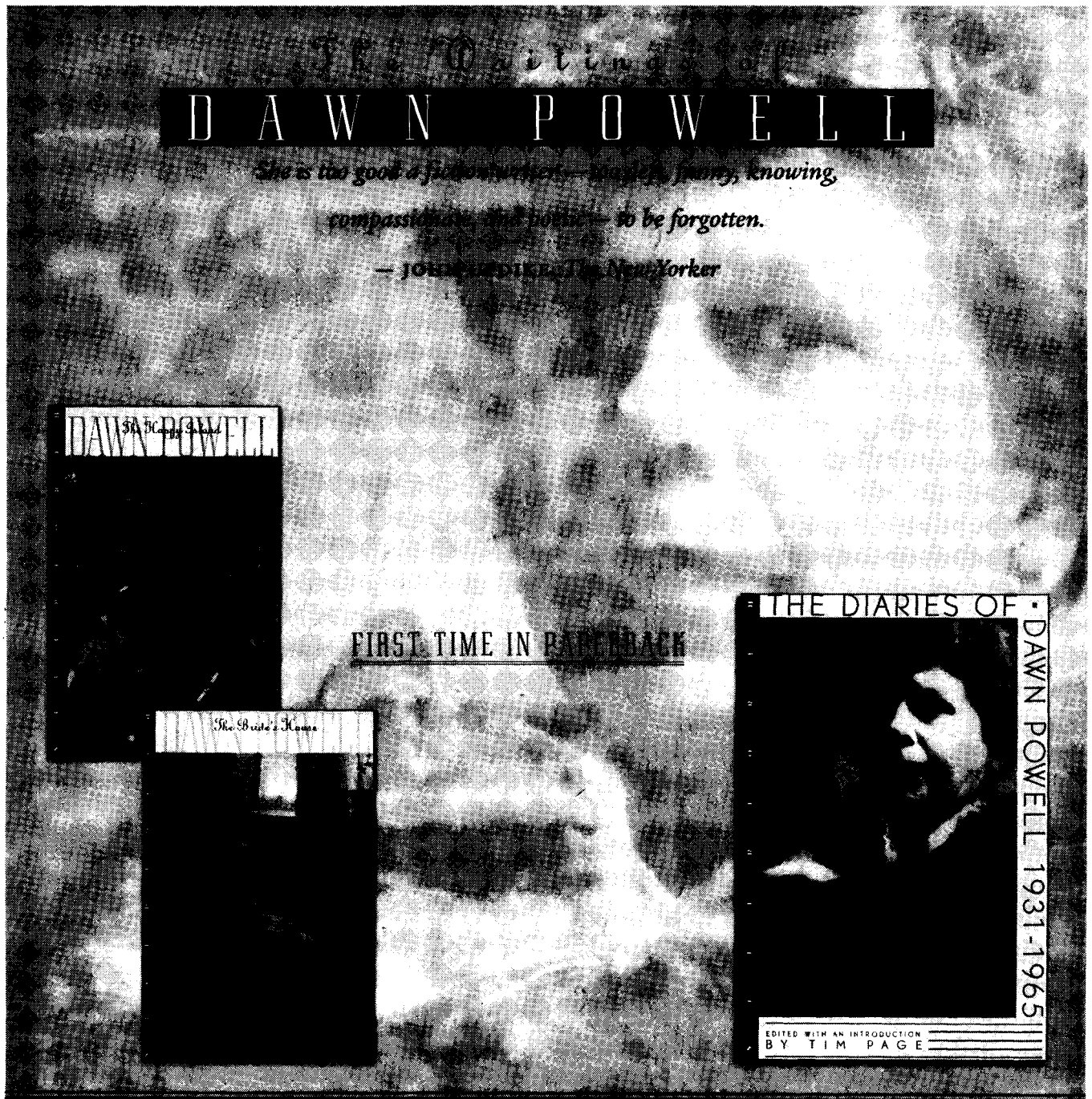

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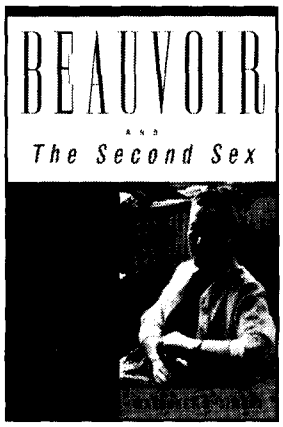

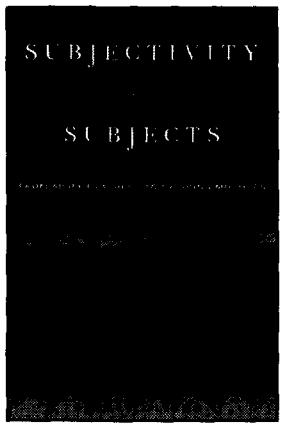

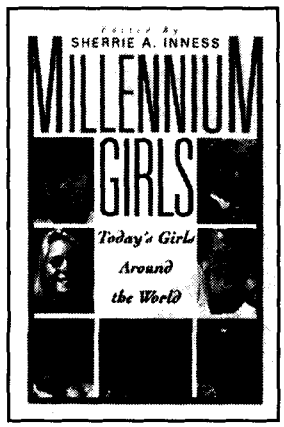

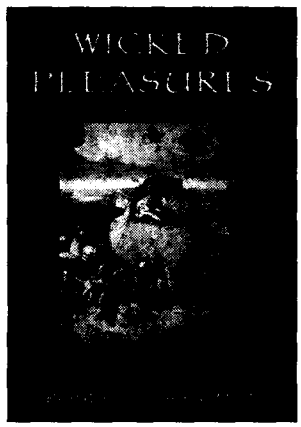

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A NEW SOLUTION TO THE JOURNALS CRISIS

BY **MARK RAMBLER**

DEC 31 1998
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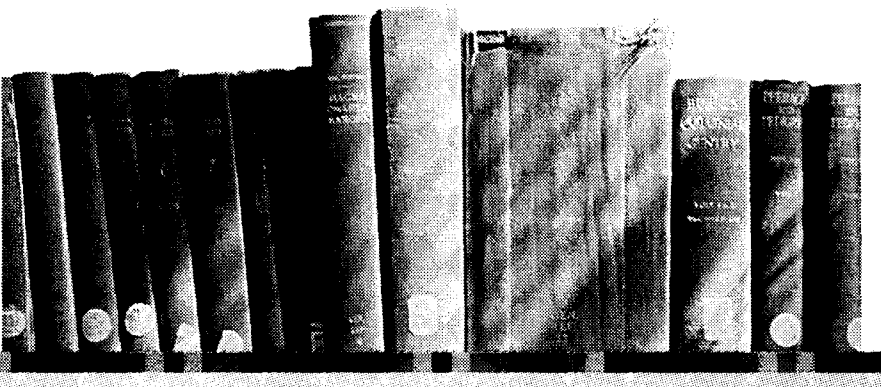
EVEN A DECADE AGO, IT WAS CLEAR THAT journal prices were spiraling out of control. In the spring of 1988, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), which is composed of the 121 largest research libraries in North America, commissioned an inquiry into the problem. The 1989 "Report of the ARL Serials Prices Project" looked at four major commercial publishers and found that increases in production costs did not even begin to explain the rising prices of journals. The study concluded that between 1973 and 1987 the publishers' profit margins must have increased by anywhere from 40 to 137 percent. "And yet we didn't do anything," says ARL president-elect Kenneth Frazier, director of libraries at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. "As members of the academic community, we're good analyzers," he says. "But these were big, smart companies, and we weren't exactly entrepreneurs."

Not surprisingly, the situation has continued to deteriorate. Since 1986, members of the ARL have spent 124 percent more money to purchase 7 percent fewer journals. Libraries simply have not been able to retain their purchasing power. Joseph Branin, dean of libraries at SUNY Stony Brook, sums up the consequences of strained budgets: "The result has been massive cancellation of library subscriptions and the steady erosion of new book purchasing."

Now Branin and other knights in shining armor have launched the Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC). This alliance of research libraries, chaired by ARL's Frazier, will encourage the establishment of new, lower-cost scholarly publications as alternatives to the prohibitively priced commercial journals. SPARC is not a publisher, but its aim is to change the ugly face of publishing. In an effort to create competition in a field dominated by a few multinational corporations, SPARC will facilitate publishing alliances among societies, university presses, smaller commercial publishers or start-ups, and libraries. These days, everyone in the university talks about outsourcing to the private sector. And indeed, scholars, especially those in the natural sciences, have been outsourcing the publication of their research for decades. But now SPARC wants to bring the publication of academic research back to its roots. Call it "in-sourcing."

How does it work? SPARC offers new journals a guaranteed subscription base and, in some cases, start-up capital. The subscribers will include those libraries that belong to SPARC. The funding will help ambitious journal entrepreneurs pay for personnel—managers, lawyers, and editors—and venues where their editorial activities and printing operations will



ARCHIVE PHOTOS

2B OR NOT 2B?

AS JOURNALS AND OTHER ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS MOVE INTO cyberspace, avid readers might expect to benefit from more information at lower cost. But that's not necessarily the way things are going. For cyberenthusiasts, the Internet may promise a world in which words will become ever easier and cheaper to distribute. But cyberspace will also allow publishers to tighten their control over texts. Already, they are turning to law and politics to do just that.

The ARL's Mary Case warns, "Not only are Reed Elsevier and the British conglomerate Thomson intent on maximizing their profits through pricing and consolidation, they are actively pursuing legislative agendas to ensure long-term protection of their revenue streams—but at the expense of education and the public good."

The commercial publishers' legislative agendas involve both copyright, in the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, and contracts, in Article 2B of the Uniform Commercial Code. The purpose of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act is a reasonable one: to protect the owners of intellectual property—writing, art, and music—from unauthorized duplication over the Internet. But many library advocates are concerned about the impact of this law on fair use, the principle which allows a person to distribute copyrighted material in a reasonable manner without the consent of the copyright owner. Interlibrary loans traditionally fall under fair-use laws, but commercial publishers have attempted to block interlibrary loans of on-line articles. This summer, Reed Elsevier ceded important ground on this front: The company announced it would allow libraries that subscribe to its electronic journals to fill interlibrary-loan requests for articles from them. Librarians can now produce printouts of articles when other libraries ask for them, but they cannot share the electronic files.

In October the House and Senate agreed on a compromise version of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, a major piece of legislation that makes it a criminal act to disable the technologies—or "digital wrappers"—that are intended to prevent unauthorized copying. Software publishers and the entertainment industry had argued for this "black box" provision because they said the Internet makes it easier for people to engage in "digital piracy." Academic interests had opposed the provision, saying it would allow companies to prevent a professor from copying a section of a digital work for personal or instructional use. Librarians stressed that publishers could prohibit them from lending pay-per-use works freely to their patrons. "If it really wanted to strike a balance in the most evenhanded way," said Adam Eisgrau, legislative counsel for the Washington, D.C.–based American Library Association, Congress could have made it

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take place. Nonetheless, those entrepreneurs will still have to take care of the pesky details that professors have been gladly handing over to commercial publishers for years: typesetting, proofreading, printing, and—not least—the difficult task of distributing a journal to far-flung libraries around the world.

On the other side of the equation are the libraries. Becoming a SPARC library requires a $5,000 annual fee and a pledge to spend a minimum of $7,500 each year on SPARC publications. Since the average ARL member's annual serials budget is $3.6 million (out of a total $5.5 million materials budget), that commitment is not onerous. So far, a hundred ARL members, including the University of Chicago, Columbia, Harvard, and the University of Michigan—plus fourteen non-ARL members—have made the decision to support this innovative publishing venture.

Initially, SPARC will focus on supporting only journals in the hard sciences—where the prices are highest and competition is most needed. A quick look at the numbers explains this situation. Last year's "Periodicals Price Survey,"

SPARC WILL ENCOURAGE THE GROWTH OF NEW, LOWER-COST SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS AS ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROHIBITIVELY PRICED COMMERCIAL JOURNALS.

published in *Library Journal*, lists the annual price increases of different disciplines' journal subscriptions. The pricing for the hard and social science journals is the most disturbing. Physics journals, with an average price of $1,495 for a library subscription, increased by 11.41 percent in one year; chemistry increased by 11 percent; math and computer science by 10.04 percent; psychology by 11.43 percent; and economics by 13.7 percent. In the humanities, where raw subscription prices are much lower, prices increased much less—history by 3.88 percent, language and literature by 3.97 percent, and music by 7.57 percent. The ARL's director of scholarly communication, Mary Case, notes, however, that libraries are forced to divert moneys from the humanities to fund the rising costs of the sciences.

Those in the library business are not shy about blaming big corporations for these outrageous numbers. Case says, "Some commercial publishers are controlling more content and raising their prices. It's becoming a dire situation."

On its Web site, the publishing giant Reed Elsevier boasts that its global strategy is to concentrate on "must have" information. In a recent *New York Times* article, a group of professors and librarians at Purdue University told Reed Elsevier that its "must have" journals had become "can't afford" and "don't need" journals. SPARC chair Frazier concludes, "The commercial publishers have simply lost contact with

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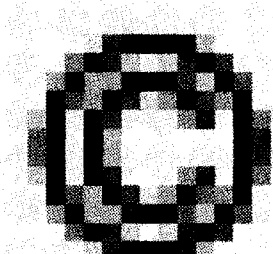
"illegal for someone to go through these digital wrappers...for the intent of what we would call digital piracy. They could have said, 'But you are permitted to go through a digital wrapper if you are doing something other than digital piracy.' What we ended up with is that it is illegal, flat out, to go through a digital wrapper."



Libraries did, however, win the database protection debate, which had divided the House and Senate. Under current law, most databases do not receive strong copyright protection. In 1991, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that you can copy a telephone directory without infringing copyright because facts cannot be copyrighted, and the listings, though expensive to create, are just facts. A listing represents mere "sweat of the brow," not creative work. Ever since that ruling, database owners such as Reed Elsevier have wished to pass legislation protecting their databases by prohibiting other companies from using their information to develop other businesses.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act originally included such a provision, but it was removed at the request of the White House and a group of senators who had objected to passing a measure that had not been addressed in public hearings. Librarians are not yet relaxing, however. Senator Orrin Hatch, the Utah Republican who chairs the Senate Judiciary Committee, has argued strongly for the database measure and said that passing a database protection bill will be "one of the highest orders of priority for the Senate Judiciary Committee" next year. Unless the President's impeachment trial is under way, of course.

Meanwhile, commercial publishers have found another battleground: the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC), which was devised to unify the laws of the fifty states in certain key areas and deals with contracts for the sales of goods. Article 2B of the UCC, which is currently being formulated by The American Law Institute (ALI), will specifically outline the laws for the licensing of information, including databases, journals, and books. Although the details have not yet been hammered out, it promises to limit the rights of the consumer.

Pamela Samuelson, a law professor at the University of California at Berkeley, says Article 2B "could totally transform the way we deal with information." Since the late 1980s, Samuelson has been producing scholarship on digital information. (For her efforts, she received a MacArthur Fellowship last year that will be worth $290,000 over the next four years.) She says, "Book publishers could start shrink-wrapping books and including licenses inside; once you break the shrink-wrapping, you would be agreeing, for example, not to review the book negatively." Worried about

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scholarly and research enterprises. They might as well be selling widgets."

As the world's largest commercial publisher of scholarly journals, Reed Elsevier is at the top of the ARL's list of dangerous companies. This publishing giant's journals arm, Elsevier Science, puts out more than eleven hundred scholarly journals for the sciences and social sciences—ranging from literary theory journals like *Poetics* and political philosophy journals like *History of European Ideas* to math, chemistry, computer science, and physics journals. The ARL points out that, before Reed Elsevier took over the *Journal of Supercritical Fluids* last year, the journal, published by Polymer Research Associates, cost $275 for a yearly subscription. A 1998 Reed Elsevier subscription costs $656. Reed Elsevier has also recently hiked the prices of journals it has owned for years. In 1995 its *Brain Research* cost a library $10,181 for a year's supply of 129 issues. This year the journal costs $15,203.

IN 1995 A YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION TO "BRAIN RESEARCH" COST $10,181. THIS YEAR IT COST $15,203.

THE STORY of conglomerate publishing of scholarly journals begins after World War II, when the Czech-born Robert Maxwell saw that scientific societies were not keeping up with their growing disciplines. Maxwell secured a loan from London's Hambros Bank and published his first scientific journals in 1948. Maxwell, the budding media mogul, supplied what academia was demanding. For while subdisciplines of scholarship were developing, the academic societies were not founding new journals. The journals of Maxwell's Pergamon Press, perfectly specialized for various emerging areas of science, soon became required reading. At the time, academics were happy to work for free when it came to publishing articles in learned journals. It's no wonder that with authors cheerfully signing their rights away, Maxwell quickly made his first fortune. In 1991 he sold Pergamon Press and its four hundred journal titles for £447 million to Holland's Elsevier, a small publisher of technical journals such as *Nuclear Engineering and Design*. Only months later, Maxwell died—tumbling off his yacht into the Atlantic—amid allegations that his mysterious shuffling of billions of dollars was an attempt to hide his financial straits. The future of English-language scientific journal publishing, it seemed, had passed to the Dutch.

In 1993 Elsevier, with more than a thousand English-language titles, merged with Britain's Reed International, a distributor of newspapers, magazines, and consumer books such as Madonna's *Sex*. Since the merger, the Anglo-Dutch media giant has sold off most of its consumer and newspaper publishing businesses and aggressively acquired data-related properties throughout Europe and North America, including Bowker/Saur, Butterworth's, Shepard's, Lexis-Nexis, and the Congressional Information Service.

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the impact of Article 2B on fair use, Samuelson has blasted the committee that is drafting the law.

Professor Raymond Nimmer of the University of Houston Law Center, who has been selected to draft the actual text of the law, says Samuelson shouldn't fear that Article 2B may endanger scholarship. It's extremely unlikely, he believes, that the publishers of books or journals would place onerous restrictions on readers. As for the software industry, he points out that restrictive licenses are already here, and here to stay. "She's making an assumption that's wrong, then building an argument from there," he says. "She says that without Article 2B, such contracts would not be legally enforceable. This is just not true." Nimmer notes that the entire software industry currently relies on contracts that are put into effect by opening the wrapper. (In a recent *Atlantic Monthly* article, Charles Mann cited the particularly egregious example of a Microsoft software program for the creation of animated characters; it comes with a license stipulating that users "have no right to make the figures 'disparage' Microsoft.")

Both the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and Article 2B are extremely complex—even some of the experts seem befuddled. Heated discussions will continue for months to come. After changes are made to the draft of the article, it could be approved—at the earliest—at the annual meeting of the ALI in May and then by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws next July. Then it has to be sent to the fifty state legislatures for adoption. Article 2B could be adopted by 2000, but Robert Oakley, a professor at the Georgetown University Law Center, says, "I think it's likely to be much later than that."

The one thing that everyone agrees on is that the unique problems of information commerce will require new laws that were not necessary in the world of books. For example, software publishers argue—and rightfully so—that lending a book to a friend is not the same as sending him a copy of a digital text: The second action can be repeated over and over again and is far more likely to dry up a publisher's revenue stream. To avert that possibility, a publisher may choose to send out information on a disk that will become unreadable after five minutes of use or that can only be used in Utah. But even measures like these won't solve the problems. Change on the legal front is as inevitable as it is difficult, because large sums of money are at stake, and because there are parties with radically different agendas. Consumer advocates like Samuelson want to make sure intellectual property laws continue to offer relatively open access to information; meanwhile, publishers like Elsevier want to make sure that they can continue to profit from their properties. **—M.R.**

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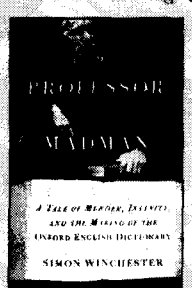

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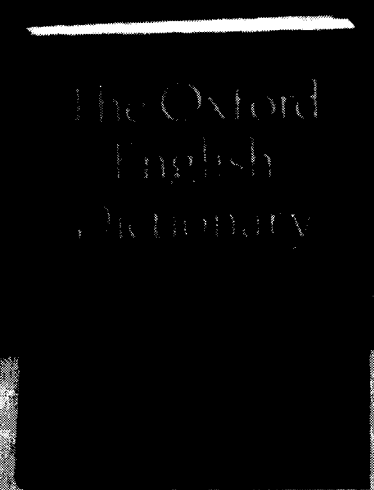

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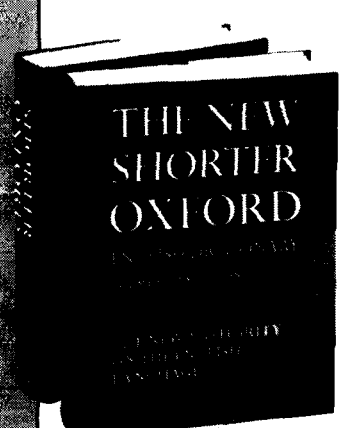

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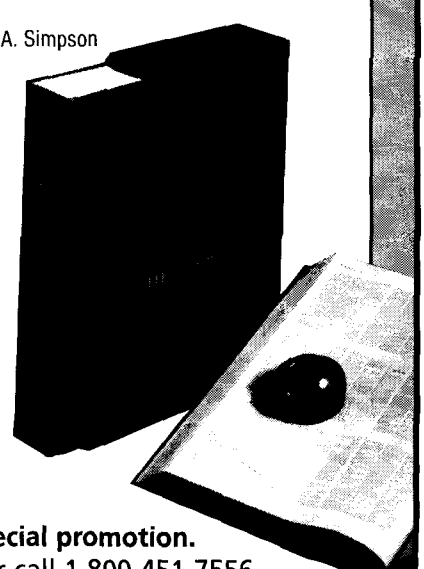

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MEDIA BARON ROBERT MAXWELL MADE HIS FIRST FORTUNE IN ACADEMIC JOURNALS—AND TRANSFORMED SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING.

All of this consolidation has led to protests. In October 1997, Reed Elsevier announced a plan to merge with rival Dutch publisher Wolters Kluwer, which itself owns Lippincott-Raven and a number of other European companies. A new company, Elsevier Wolters Kluwer, would have created the world's largest publisher of professional and trade journals, with estimated combined 1997 revenues of nearly $9 billion. The European Commission, however, received complaints from academics and competitors who feared that the merger would result in a virtual monopoly on law and medical publishing, and it was set to insist that some titles—mostly from the Wolters Kluwer list—be sold off. In a terse March 9 statement, the two companies called off the merger, saying that the conditions the European Commission was likely to impose on the alliance would have "adverse implications" for their shareholders. But Reed Elsevier has other merger options—including reported talks about a large deal with none other than Microsoft. (Reed Elsevier has already signed a $30 million, five-year agreement to use Microsoft's commercial Internet services and its software to support the publisher's products.)

ONE MIGHT think that consolidating thousands of journals under one roof would create efficiencies that would keep prices down. But to the distress of librarians, exactly the opposite has happened. To be sure, a fundamental reason why these serials are expensive is that a scholarly journal is selling to a very limited audience. No matter how many potential readers exist, a typical university buys only one copy, then makes that copy available to students and faculty who want it in perpetuity. Even though a given journal may appeal to a hundred thousand readers, it may sell only a thousand copies.

But Karen Hunter, a senior vice president at Elsevier Science, says there are other good reasons for the high prices. She begins to enumerate them with the ease and polish of someone who has done this before. The main reason the price of journals has gone up, she says, is that "there is just so much more good literature to publish than ever before." When a journal publishes more articles in each issue, its editorial and production costs rise accordingly. Hunter offers three other reasons for the rise in journal prices. She explains that prices must keep up with inflation, and "you can argue what your inflation rate should be." Also, since Reed Elsevier primarily publishes in Europe, "the exchange rate can increase the cost here in the United States." Last, she says, "We have to build allowances into our prices for cancellations. Cancellations for libraries have become significant in the last five years." In other words, there's a vicious circle: If a library cancels a subscription because a journal is too expensive, the journal will cost more; then other libraries will cancel their subscriptions, which will increase the cost of the journal further.

Of course, there's another, less flattering explanation for the rising cost of journals: price gouging. More often than not, librarians are unwilling to cancel subscriptions to much-needed journals, and so the conglomerates feel free to raise prices with impunity. With captive readers and career-conscious authors eager to offer their work for free, publishers have a great deal of leverage over the market. SUNY's Branin says, "Sure, librarians should stand firm and refuse to buy journals that are overpriced. But that's not so easy. I've gone to academic departments and said, 'Hey, this journal just went up 50 percent and we want to cancel.' They've come back and said, 'We don't care—it's a major journal in our field and you'll have to pay whatever it costs.'"

ALL OF the librarians' frustrations came to a head in May 1997, at the annual meeting of the ARL. Douglas Bennett, who was then the vice president of the American Council of Learned Societies, gave an inspired presentation about potential new models of scholarly publishing. SPARC chair Frazier explains, "Just like with any good conference, the discussion spilled out into the corridors." Frazier began discussing concrete steps that could be taken with ARL members Fred Heath, Texas A&M dean and director of libraries; Margo Crist, University of Massachusetts director of libraries; Carla Stoffle, dean of libraries at the University of Arizona; and Jim Neal, dean of libraries at Johns Hopkins. "We said to each other, 'Let's just do this. Let's just all put money in and be prepared for it to be a huge public failure.' We weren't so sure it would work, but we just really felt we had to do something."

This past July SPARC launched its first project: The organization signed an agreement with the American Chemical Society (ACS), which will work with SPARC to publish three new journals over the next three years. The first issue of the first journal, a bimonthly publication called *Organic Letters,* is scheduled to appear next July. The projected price is $2,300 per year, compared to this year's $8,000 subscription price for Elsevier's *Tetrahedron Letters,* against which *Organic Letters* will compete head-to-head.

Although *Organic Letters* will be published in both paper and on-line form, Frazier stresses that, ultimately, eliminating paper will create the most compelling and cost-effective products. An electronic journal is SPARC's second initiative. In a collaboration with the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC), SPARC will, as under the ACS agreement, aid in the creation of three new alternative journals over a three-year period. The first project with the RSC is *PhysChemComm,* a peer-reviewed electronic journal that competes directly with a commercial title that costs more than $8,000. *PhysChemComm* costs just $350 per year and its price is expected to rise to about $700 in 2003 as the number of articles increases.

SPARC's third venture involves something else entirely—supporting a journal that used to be with a big publisher. Not long ago Dr. Michael Rosenzweig, the editor in chief of *Evolutionary Ecology,* was distressed when Wolters Kluwer bought his journal from Chapman & Hall; he feared that Kluwer would raise prices dramatically, alienating readers. So

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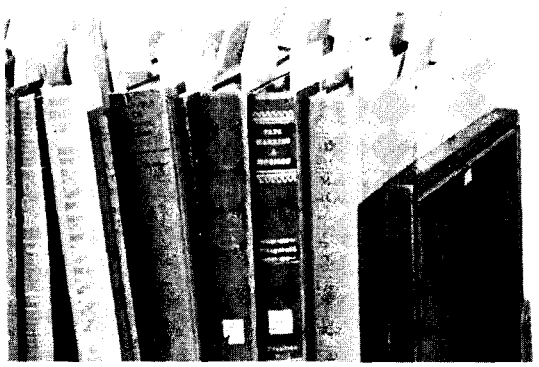
he lit out on his own, founding a publishing company called Evolutionary Ecology Ltd. Before long, he was joined by his editorial board of more than two dozen distinguished scholars. Now he and the board are editing a new journal, *Evolutionary Ecology Research*. It will sell for $290 a year, compared with $777 for the Wolters Kluwer journal, which is still publishing with new editors. Rosenzweig had not signed a non-compete clause with Wolters Kluwer, a clause included in some journals' contracts that prevents editors from starting another journal. Still, he notes that the legal issues are complex. "The trademark issues are very delicate," he says. He lowers his voice. "I'm not even sure what I can say to you. Let's just say that Wolters Kluwer is not 100 percent happy with *Evolutionary Ecology Research*."



When Rosenzweig left Wolters Kluwer, he had not heard of SPARC. Now SPARC is helping his new journal get on its feet by aiding with subscriptions to libraries and, possibly, funding. Rosenzweig estimates production costs for the first year to be "well under $100,000." He has raised the money himself and boasts that his company will be a "for-profit publisher offering a cost-based journal subscription rate."

THIS LAST model for launching journals may be the most promising. When the editors of an established journal desert their corporate publishers, they can still put their distinguished reputations and publishing experience to good use. Without these editors, a new publication is almost certainly doomed to anonymity and, hence, failure. It's not surprising, then, that Frazier should boast of SPARC's ambitions to take existing journals away from their sponsors.

But leaving your publisher is not always easy. In virtually all cases, the publishing company can prevent editors from taking along a journal's subscription list, its back issues, and—not least—its name. Robert Shirrell, journals manager at the University of Chicago Press—one of the few university presses that publishes hard science journals—points out that in many cases the most valuable aspect of a journal may be, in fact, its name. After all, the system of academic promotion and tenure supports the status quo by associating prestige with the most well-established titles, not new ones. While Shirrell says it is a worthwhile effort, he predicts that neither of SPARC's two activities—creating new journals and stealing existing ones—is likely to make much of a difference in the long run. "SPARC can create journals, but that is, to say the least, a very long-term proposition," he says. "And stealing journals from conglomerates will be very very difficult."

Janet Fisher, the associate director of

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journals publishing at MIT Press, echoes the point. "We frequently run into journal editors who believe they can move to a new publisher but who, after looking at the contract, see they don't have the power to do that. When editors say to a publisher, 'We don't want to work with you,' it just means they resign as editors. They're not firing the publisher. They can't."

Fisher adds that starting a new journal in today's competitive publishing environment is extremely difficult. "Twenty years ago a journal could reach a thousand libraries in two or three years. Now, the chance of reaching a thousand libraries is absolutely nil. You can't get anywhere close to that. If SPARC gave me $10,000 to start a new journal, it would not come close to what I would lose in my first year, which would be between $50,000 and $100,000."

SPARC chair Frazier concedes it has not been easy to convince people that he can succeed at breaking the hold of the conglomerates and bringing down journals' prices. "People always assumed that we in academic circles couldn't do things as well as the private sector. Universities and libraries had been contracting out everything, and the idea of bringing publishing in-house made a lot of folks break out in a rash."

FRAZIER HOPES THAT A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF JOURNAL EDITORS WILL DESERT THEIR PUBLISHERS.

Still, Frazier hopes that a substantial number of established journal editors will take flight. "I know there are many editors out there dissatisfied with their commercial publisher," he says. "Most of them have long lists of complaints, including pricing policies, treatment of individual subscribers, and the fact that authors can't make use of their own papers in secondary markets." SPARC's Richard Johnson says the organization hopes to attract authors with the offer of granting them somewhat greater control over their work. In the next several months, SPARC and the American Chemical Society are jointly sponsoring a series of focus groups with authors to discuss these issues. "Let me emphasize, however," says Johnson, "that nobody wins if our partners don't have a financially viable enterprise."

SPARC has its work cut out for it. Without the bank accounts of the big commercial publishers, or the prestige of the established journals, SPARC will have to convince scholars that the situation is bad enough to risk change.

But Frazier is nonetheless hopeful. "We can help editorial boards rename and restart their journals," he proclaims. SPARC, he adds, can free editors of the delusions that "they're in involuntary servitude, and that there's nothing they can do about it." Indeed, if Frazier has his way, their emancipation will have just begun.

Mark Rambler is an assistant editor at *The American Lawyer.*

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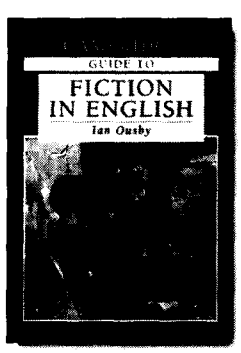
Ian Ousby



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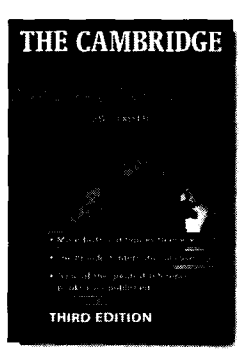

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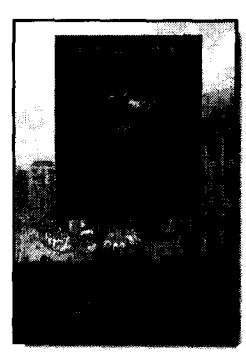

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continued from page 7

Letters

at several points concerning the proposed Shakespeare elegy and my own role in the controversy surrounding it. Though I do compare W.S.'s poem with Shakespeare's collaborative drama *The Two Noble Kinsmen,* I don't interpret the play as an allegory of William Peter's murder. Anyone who reads what I have written will see that Crain's insinuated allegory is a misattribution. Nor do I recognize myself in Crain's portrait of a true believer who finds "doubters guilty of 'emotional resistance.'" I would welcome an informed debate on the *Elegye,* though so far the problem has been how to engage with critics whom Crain himself characterizes as "aghast."

Critics complain that the elegy is "boring." But we take too narrow a view of poetry if we believe that its purpose has been, universally and transhistorically, to entertain. We don't automatically devalue Tudor women's penitential poetry just because it fails to amuse; we accept that the writers themselves found spiritual benefit in the discipline of writing, and that's enough. Similarly, privately published funeral verses may not meet the expectations of modern readers hoping for another *Venus and Adonis,* but they may have served the elegist's own needs, and those of the friends and family of the deceased. Scholarship demands that we conscientiously historicize W.S.'s labors—a commitment that will cost more effort than our Brahmin bardolators, operating at an incurious aestheticist level, have ever been willing to invest.

A final matter, somewhat technical: Crain quotes my offhand remark that "I feel bad about not letting Mac off the hook." I was referring to my multi-installment debate with MacDonald Jackson in the pages of *Shakespeare Newsletter.* The "hook" Jackson was on (at least in my view) was that he had included instances of the infinitive "to" in his count of W.S.'s use of prepositional "to." Whether or not I was correct, I regret harping. MacDonald Jackson is a first-rate scholar. I should have let him off the hook.

Crain, however, reports me as not only repenting the flap over prepositional "to" but recanting my attempts to redeem for a Shakespearean attribution W.S.'s use of three other prepositions. I have no studied opinion regarding those prepositions, but I haven't recanted my earlier observations, which sought to demonstrate statistical trends in W.S.'s usage. Even if Jackson were right to disregard those chronological "trends" as resting on too small a sample of verses, I still insist that the counter-example of three prepositions cannot greatly damage Foster's strong statistical case.

RICHARD ABRAMS
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE
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Caleb Crain replies: I neither wrote nor insinuated that Richard Abrams reads *The Two Noble Kinsmen* as an allegory of William Peter's death. As to "emotional resistance," Abrams may not recognize the words, but he wrote them.. It's true that Abrams's regret over the tone he took with Jackson referred to their dispute over "to." About the other three prepositions, Abrams now writes that "I haven't recanted" but "have no studied opinion." That may not be a retraction, but it's hardly a ringing endorsement. Perhaps Abrams can let me off the hook.

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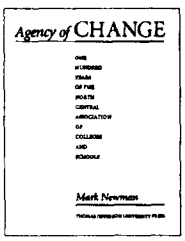

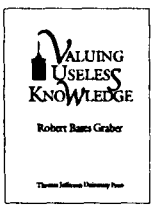

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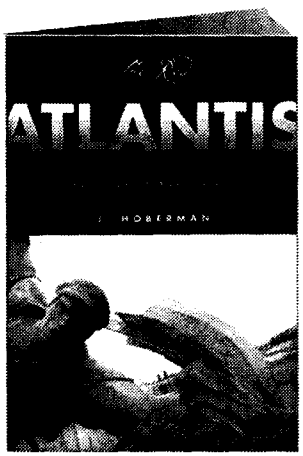

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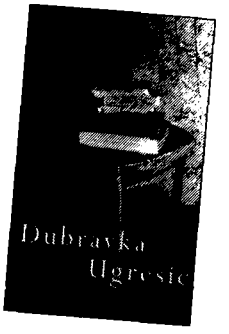

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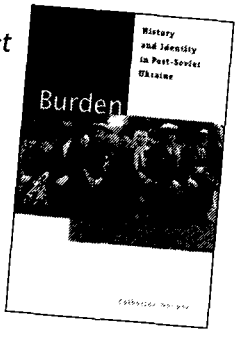

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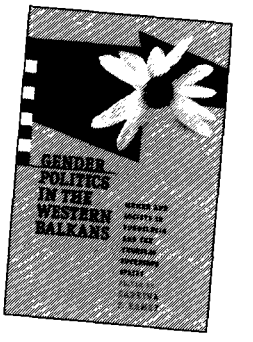

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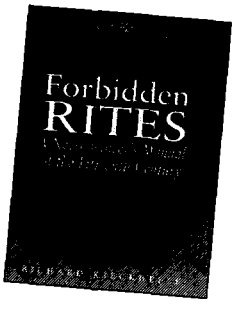

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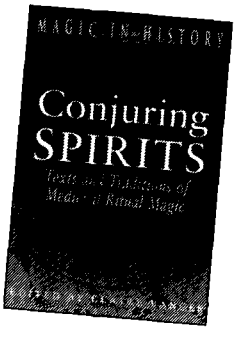

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anniversary of Gertrude Stein's birth, Washington University in St. ... "Gertrude Stein @ the Millennium," on the importance of Stein's ... poetry and prose and the role it is likely to play in the next century. ... Brakhage, William Gass, Lyn Hejinian and Kenneth Koch; panelists ... Chapman, Ulla Dydo, Harryette Mullen, Lola Pashalinski, Marjorie ... Roubaud and Catharine Stimpson. The conference also features ... *and Alice: A Likeness to Loving*, directed by Bogart and written and ... Pashalinski, as well as a showing of Brakhage's film sequence, *Vision* ... information, please contact Steven Meyer, English Department, ... Box 1122, St. Louis, MO 63130-4899; email: sjmeyer@artsci.

St. Louis, MO: February 5–7, 1999

ELLINGTON AT 100

The Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center announces the 22nd annual University of North Carolina Jazz Festival, February 22–28, 1999 on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In conjunction with the Institute of African American Research, the Carolina Union Performing Arts Committee, the Center for the Study of the American South and the Department of Music, the Center will this year celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of jazz legend Duke Ellington. The festival includes hands-on workshops, clinicians, and an academic symposium. For more information: Dr. Gerald Horne, Director, Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, CB# 5250, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5250; phone: 919-962-9001; email: shsbcc@email.unc.edu

Chapel Hill, NC: February 22–28, 1999

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC

The boundary separating the private from the public shifts constantly; it is contested and historically bound. The 1999 University of Delaware Hagley Fellows Conference, "Private Time, Private Space, Private Parts: Negotiating the Boundaries of Private and Public in History," will focus on this cultural process. Laura Engelstein, author of *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia*, and professor of history at Princeton University, will be the keynote speaker. There is no registration fee, but all participants must register in advance for the conference. For more information, call (302) 658-2400, ext. 243, weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; fax: (302) 655 3188, or email: crl@udel.edu. Conference program can be viewed via Hagley Museum and Library's web site: //www.hagley.lib.de.us.

Wilmington, DE: February 26, 1999

CROSSING BORDERS

The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York announces the second Crossing Borders Conference: Latino/a and Latin American Lesbian and Gay Testimony, Autobiography, and Self-Figuration. This conference will focus on the way that texts and performances of self-figuration by Latina/o queers reflect, inflect, misread, translate, or reject the traditions of self-representation associated with the development of contemporary queer cultures in the United States. Participants include Emilio Bejel, UC-Boulder; Norma Mogrovejo, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; Carlos Monsiváis; Cherrie Moraga, Stanford; Sylvia Molloy, NYU; Rubén Ríos-Ávila, Universidad de Puerto Rico; David Román, USC; Alberto Sandoval, Mount Holyoke; Yvonne-Yarbro-Bejarano, Stanford . The Conference is made possible by a gift from Michael C.P. Ryan. For information contact: CLAGS, GSUC, 33 West 42nd Street, Room 404N, New York, NY 10036. Telephone: (212) 642-2924. Fax: (212) 642-2920. Email: <clags@email.gc.cuny.edu>

New York, NY: March 11–13, 1999

CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE SELF

"Constructions of the Self: The Poetics of Subjectivity" is the First Annual University of South Carolina Comparative Literature Conference. This conference seeks to offer the broadest possible forum for discussing the problem of the discursive construction of the self as it has been examined in the fields of literature, philosophy, history, semiotics, and psychoanalysis. Select papers will be published in *Intertexts*. One page abstracts and all inquiries should be sent to Paul Allen Miller, Director, Program in Comparative Literature, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208, or to pamiller@sc.edu, by March 1, 1999. Plenaries: Joan Copjec(SUNY Buffalo); Wayne A. Rebhorn (UT Austin). Featured speakers to include: Joel Black (Georgia); George Elliot Clarke (Duke); Suzanne Guerlac (Emory); Micaela Janan (Duke); Sharon Ni (Texas Tech); Chuck Platter (Georgia); Sally Spence (Georgia).

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Hypotheses

STAYING ALIVE

All you ever wanted to know about immortality

LIKE MOST OF US, BENJAMIN Franklin did not want to die. Late in his life he expressed the wish that some method of preserving corpses might be found that would allow them eventually to be resuscitated. "Having a very ardent desire to see and observe the state of America a hundred years hence," he wrote in 1773, "I should prefer to an ordinary death, being immersed with a few friends in a cask of Madeira, until that time, then to be recalled to life by the solar warmth of my dear country!"

Franklin may be dead, but his dream of bodily immortality isn't. Right now, at life-extension foundations around the country, there are several dozen corpses lying submerged in vats not of Madeira but of liquid nitrogen (temperature: -320 degrees F). The fond hope is that scientific advances will permit the decedents to be resurrected one day—perhaps not in time for the turn of the millennium but certainly by the beginning of the twenty-second century, when those of us who failed to make such provisions for immortality will be dead and gone.

One of these cadavers, at least according to legend, is that of Walt Disney. He is said to have elected to have his entire body deep-frozen—a needlessly extravagant choice. As most philosophers will tell you, the real vehicle of personal identity is not the body but a mere three-pound component of it: the brain. Heeding this wisdom, hundreds of other people have made arrangements to have their heads cut off with chain saws immediately upon being declared dead and put in cryogenic suspension within earthquake-proof "cephalaria." This cheaper option is called "going neuro," as opposed to the whole-body approach. "Actually, we think of it as removing the body," says the magazine of the Alcor Life Extension Foundation in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Is all this anything more than a waste of liquid nitrogen? Freezing bodily tissue, it is true, damages each and every cell. But such damage could be repaired by an army of molecule-sized robots, just the sort of thing we'll be seeing in the next century, thanks to the emerging field of nanotechnology (from *nanos*, Greek for "dwarf"). As for what to do with the thawed-out and reconditioned brains, that's the easy part: Simply lodge them in a fresh body cloned from a bit of the decedent's DNA. The newly resurrected person will of course notice a sharp experiential discontinuity but will be oblivious of the decades-long "biostatic coma" that has finally come to an end.

Should this resuscitation scheme be realized in the next century or so—and, given that each part of it is technologically plausible, who's to say it won't?—immortality still will not be assured to those who try it. One problem is that our brain cells, like all the other nonreproductive cells in the body, are genetically programmed to self-destruct in a finite time period [see Hypotheses, November 1998]. Freezing such cells has been shown to delay the onset of their suicide but not to eliminate it.

But let's suppose, again plausibly, that geneticists eventually find a way to disable the suicide program encoded in the brain cells' DNA. Although the cells would still wear down over time, this entropy could be corrected by nanotech robots. Then the brain would be essentially immortal. Yet it is still subject to the risk of being destroyed in an accident—the probability of which, given enough time, approaches 100 percent. Once the brain is vaporized, any hope for the persistence of personal identity would pretty much seem to vanish.

Unless, that is, there was a backup copy in some safe place. Now, not even the giddiest futurist is proposing that we will be able to build a perfect working replica of a given person's brain any time soon. But this might not be necessary. The important thing about the brain is not the lump of spongy gray meat itself but the stream of mental life it supports. The psychological continuity that gives rise to personal identity is a matter of brain activities involving memory, belief, and desire—all of which, in theory, could be downloaded into a computer. The brain is, after all, a system that obeys physical laws, and any such system can be simulated by a sufficiently powerful computing device.

Once this software of personal identity is extracted from the brain, the possibilities are endless. Human minds could be implemented in "alternative hardware," such as robots. They could be faxed from one galaxy to another at the speed of light. The only real threat to immortality that would seem to remain would be the end of the universe itself—either through the "heat death" of eternal expansion or ultimate contraction into an apocalyptic Big Crunch. Remarkably, scientific believers in eternal life have both scenarios covered. For the former, Freeman Dyson, physicist at the Institute for Advanced Study, has imagined implanting our minds in interstellar dust clouds whose activities would slow as the universe expands, resulting in a stretched-out but still infinite series of "moments of consciousness." For the latter scenario, the physicist Frank Tipler has argued in *The Physics of Immortality* (Anchor, 1995) that the energy of the Big Crunch could be harnessed to provide infinite computational power in the last second—and hence subjectively infinite time, as mental state followed mental state at an ever more rapid clip.

If such prospects for eternal life seem inhuman—or worse, tedious—there are always the old sham ways to achieve immortality: through one's children, through one's work. Apparently those weren't good enough for Ben Franklin or Walt Disney—or, for that matter, Woody Allen, who once sensibly said, "I don't want to achieve immortality through my work. I want to achieve immortality through not dying."

JIM HOLT

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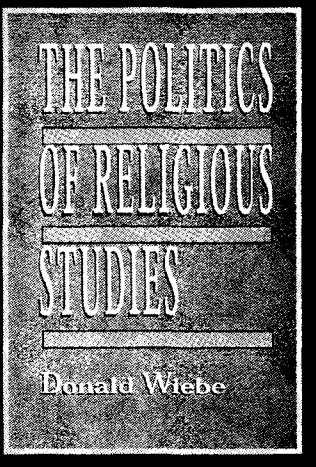

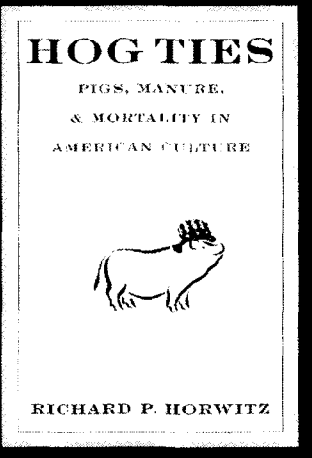

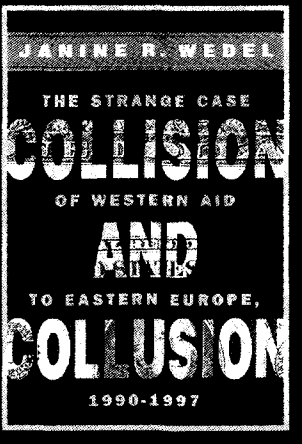

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